

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM WITHIN THE SAMOAN
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN THE DIASPORA

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Brian T. Alofaituli

Thesis Committee:

John Mayer, Chairperson
David Chappell
David Hanlon

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For my beloved grandmother's Faimalie Taito Williams and Ava'avau Uelese O'Brien
& talking Chief Moeiseu Tagaloa Alofaituli

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There are not enough words in either the Samoan language or in English to fully express my *fa'amalō*, my *fa'afetai*, and *fiafia* with the completion of this academic project. My academic journey started with a prayer. I am forever grateful to my spiritual leaders: the late Rev. Samuelu Olo, the late Rev. Apela Moananu and Susana (EFKS Falefa), Rev. So'oaso Lefotu, Rev. Apelu Po'e, and my current *faiife'au* Rev. Fiatupu and Ta'imua Tavai for their prayers, blessings, and spiritual guidance not only for me, but for Samoan youth throughout the world who are pursuing excellence in all areas of life.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the potential role the Samoan Congregational Christian churches can play as effective and strong language and cultural educators in the diaspora. In order to achieve this objective it is important to maintain a high level of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) through *demographic support*, *institutional support*, and *social status support* within the community and the church. The local congregational churches of Carson, California provide a support system of learning, observing, and teaching of the Samoan language and culture for both Samoans and non-Samoans interested in engaging with the *fa'asāmoa* (Samoan way of life). The future of the Samoan language and culture in the diaspora is dependent upon an active community to maintain and teach the Samoan language, especially among the church community. Sample curricula have been prepared to assist in accomplishing these goals. The purpose of this thesis is to promote language development for local congregational churches in the diaspora.

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GLOSSARY OF SAMOAN WORDS AND PHRASES

The following Samoan words, phrases and expressions are based on Ma'ia'i's *Tusi 'Upu Sāmoa: The Samoan Dictionary* (2010), Pratt's *Grammar and Dictionary* (1893), and Milner's *Samoan Dictionary* (1966). I have also included definitions based on my knowledge of colloquial Samoan.

GLOSSARY

'afuelo	special fine mat used to cover deceased casket
'aiavā	food and gifts presented to guests on first night at the village and the last day as well
'āiga	a family, a relative, cohabiting, as the beginning of a family
'āoga	a teaching, a school
'aufaipese	choir
'aumāga	young untitled men
'ava	narcotic drink (Piper Methysticum) used during Samoan ceremony of welcoming guests
A'oa'o	assistant pastor
agānu'u	the Samoan custom
aitu	spirit, ghost
alofa	love
Atua	God
auauma	the company of single women
autalavou	youth or young people of a village or church, the term <i>autalavou</i> often refers to young people within the church
'ie	a cloth
'ie toga	Samoan fine mat
'ioe	yes
fa'afeagaiga	referred to the pastor as the "covenant one"
fa'aipoipoga	wedding ceremony
fa'alavelave	family responsibilities of giving fine mats, monies, time, and service (e.g. weddings, funerals, a bestowal of chiefly title, dedication of church and houses, celebrations, etc.)
fa'amāvaega	to depart
fa'apatu	referred to girls and women who put their hair in a knob or a "bun"
fa'asāmoa	the Samoan way of life
fa'atonu	a director

fa'aulufalega	dedication of church sanctuary or Samoan traditional house
fa'avae	foundation
fa'alupega	village honorifics
fa'amagalo	forgiveness
faife'au	pastor or reverend
faitau pī	Samoan alphabet chart
fale	house
faletua	wife of a chief
fau tāu ava	hibiscus fibre strainer (used in preparation for kava)
feagāiga	covenant of personal kinship
feau	chore
fitafita	Samoan military men
folafola	to publically announce
fono	meeting
gagana	language
ilamutu	descendants (in the female line) of the <i>tama fafine</i> (eldest female) with whom a covenant of perpetual kinship (<i>feagaiga</i>) was first established
ipu 'ava	cup used to serve the 'ava
lauga	speech
leai	no
lei	a flowered necklace
lotu	church
Lotu Tamaiti	Children's Day, also known as White Sunday (second Sunday of the month of October)
malae	traditional village green
malaga	a travelling party
maliu	death
mālō	government
matāgaluega	district
matai	chief
Mau	Samoan based group formed during colonized years of Samoa to promote 'Samoa for Samoa'
mauluulu	Samoan dance
nu'u	village
pālagi	white man
pāpā	paramount titles of Sāmoa
pulega	sub-district
puletasi	dress worn by Samoan women
pulotu	the underworld
sa'o	a senior title holder of a group of chiefs and clans
sāsā	dance by performing synchronized slapping
sauali'i	a respectful term for <i>aitu</i> (god)
selu	comb

siva	Samoa dance
suafa	a formal word for ‘name’
susū	a formal word for ‘go’
tafa’ifā	four of the most paramount titles of Sāmoa
talanoa(ga)	to make conversation, discussion
tama lelei	good boy
tama sā	child (or children) of a man’s sister (towards whom he has special duties and responsibilities)
tānoa	‘ava bowl
taupou	daughter of a high ranking chief, a village maiden (a position held according to Samoan custom by a virgin singled out for charm, looks, and manners)
tausi	wife of a talking chief (<i>tulāfale</i>)
tautua	service
teine lelei	good girl
to’ona’i	Sunday meal
toea’ina	elder
tu’ua	high ranking chief
tugase	dried piece of ‘ava root presented to important visitors during the ‘ava ceremony
tulāfale	talking chief
umu	Samoa stone oven
usita’i	to obey

PHRASES

Ā’oga Aso Sā	Sunday school
Ā’oga Faife’au	Pastor School (Seminary)
Āso Sā	Sunday
‘āiga potopoto	extended family
‘au toe’aina	council of elders (pastors)
Fa’avae i le Atua Sāmoa	Samoa is founded on God
faife’au toea’ina	pastor elder
fono tele	general assembly meeting
gagana a matai	chiefly language
gagana fa’aaloalo	language of respect
gagana fa’asāmoa	Samoa language
gagana ta’atele	everyday spoken Samoa
Ia Muamua le Atua	Place God first
mafutaga tinā	women’s committee
Matāgaluega i Kalefonia i Saute	district of Southern California (EFKAS)
tautala leaga	speak poorly
tautala lelei	speak well
tautua fa’asāmoa	service within the context of Sāmoa

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOG	Assembly of God
API	Academic Performance Index
CA	California
CCCAS	Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa (EFKAS)
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church of Sāmoa (EFKS)
CWM	Council of World Missions
EFKAS	<i>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Sāmoa (CCCAS)</i>
EFKS	<i>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Sāmoa (CCCS)</i>
EV	Ethnolinguistic Vitality
KFTS	Kanana Fou Theological Seminary
LA	Los Angeles
LMS	London Missionary Society
NAS	New American Standard
NOSA	National Office of Samoan Affairs
NZ	New Zealand
SAI	Samoan Achievers International
SCC	Samoan Congregational Church (of Carson)
SLR	Samoan Language of Respect
SVQ	Subjective Vitality Questionnaire
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The Samoan community in the U.S. has grown tremendously over the past few decades and the wave of migration of Samoans to the U.S. mainland, Hawai'i, New Zealand and Australia continues to grow.¹ As a result of such migration, a “traditional” culture and language within the Samoan community is practiced less frequently due to the process of assimilation within the new English speaking culture. Lesā (2009:20) has claimed that this assimilation of cultures has given rise to a “hybrid Samoan” identity. He demonstrates that there is an integration of new ways of life into the old ways. The process of acculturation and assimilation that is occurring within the Samoan community has resulted in many second and third generation Samoan youth questioning their Samoanness². Some youth have been criticized for not knowing their language and culture, and as a result they have tried to prove being more Samoan through their actions, their attitude, their words, and what they wear. During traditional ceremonies many youth born in the diaspora will typically come prepared with their *'ie lavalava* or sarong and they are ready to contribute their time. Many hope that their contribution through these activities will result in gaining confirmation by the elders as being *tama lelei* or *teine lelei*, good Samoan boy or good Samoan girl. As a result of this process of assimilation many

¹ U.S. Census Bureau records from the year 2000 indicate: approximately 91,029 Samoans in the U.S.; 37,498 in California; 15,904 in Hawai'i; and 12,836 in Los Angeles County. Recent 2010 U.S. Census records are unavailable.

² Lesā refers to “Samoanness” as a means of showing “how Samoan someone else may be.”

Samoan youth have begun to practice “performative culture”³ in order to fit within the scope of Samoanness and gain this recognition within the community at various levels.

As former Director of Christian Education for the *Matāgaluega i Kalefonia i Saute* of the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa⁴ I was often approached by people within the ministry including *faife’au* (pastors), *matai* (chiefs), and people of the general congregation interested in knowing why their children and Samoan children in general were not speaking Samoan and practicing more of the culture, especially at the church. I would often emphasize that the church can only do so much to support and develop language and culture within our particular setting. What is lacking is the supporting work that must be done by the parents within the confines of the family or the *‘āiga*. This kind of questioning is a reflection of the important role and responsibility the church has been given within the diaspora to assist in the teaching of the culture and language. Lesā (2009:65) writes, “For Samoans who live abroad, the church is indeed their only resort to enhance their Samoan identity through an awareness and competence in their heritage language and culture.” The Samoan churches abroad assist in development of language and culture, and they have become “surrogate villages” where people can associate and become recognized as Samoans.

There is a dependency that is placed upon the church to educate Samoan children. This is a practice that was first implemented as early as the 19th century through the

³ James Viernes, Personal Conversation, 2 October 2010. “Performative Culture” is a term used by Viernes to describe youth born and raised in the diaspora who go through the motions of acting out their culture in order to gain acceptance within their community.

⁴ The Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa (CCCAS) is also known as the *Ekalesia Fa’apotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Sāmoa* (EFKAS). The headquarters are located in American Sāmoa at Kanana Fou Theological Seminary. The *Matāgaluega i Kalefonia i Saute* (Southern California District) is one of numerous districts of the Kanana Fou Church, expanding throughout American Sāmoa, New Zealand, Australia, Hawai’i, and the U.S. mainland.

ā'oga faife'au (pastor's school). The *ā'oga faife'au* would teach children how to read, do arithmetic, practice cursive writing, and maintain the *gagana* or language (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984:108, Lesā 2009:60-61). Many of the first and second generation parents in the diaspora grew up in the islands attending the *ā'oga faife'au* and it continues in Sāmoa today. Those are the type of expectations parents assume should be practiced in the diaspora. Unfortunately, many *faife'au* in the diaspora have been unsuccessful in implementing a curriculum due to the wide geographic location of families, school and work schedules, the lack of interest of both parents and children, and in some cases, a lack of interest of the *faife'au*.

I grew up in America not having *ā'oga faife'au* for many of the reasons stated above. My *faife'au* did try to implement a curriculum that would fit everybody's schedule, but it was never feasible. For working parents the times would either be too early or in some instances, just too late. Because formal classes were not possible the pastor would emphasize more of the *'autalavou* (youth) events like White Sunday⁵, Sunday school, Bible study, youth choir, and traditional dancing luau's as options to educate the youth about aspects of the culture and language. These activities within the church were initiated by the *faife'au* to promote culture and language in addition to spiritual awareness.

The church in the diaspora is an excellent *nu'u* (village) away from Sāmoa to support the practice of the *fa'asāmoa*. The term *fa'asāmoa* is defined in literature as the

⁵ White Sunday also known as *Lotu Tamaiti* or Children's Day is an annual event that takes place on the second Sunday of the month of October. The initial *Lotu Tamaiti* took place in 1895. The LMS missionaries noticed that many children were malnourished and ill due to the lack of attention by parents because of ongoing wars in Sāmoa. On this day, children are dressed in all white and entertain the congregation through memorized Bible verses, plays, and songs in Samoan and English. This is a LMS tradition that is now practiced by many other denominations in Sāmoa.

practice of the Samoan culture and its way of life. Authors have been correct in defining this term generally, but it is more than just culture; there is a responsibility in the *fa'asāmoa* to practice the language (Simanu 2002:65). Trying to determine a single definition of *fa'asāmoa* is problematic because it is not centered on one particular area; there are many perceptions of what *fa'asāmoa* is and means (Anae 1998:75).

‘Auimatagi, a High Talking Chief (*tulāfale*) from Independent Sāmoa illustrated the variety of the *fa'asāmoa* when he commented on a trip he made to San Francisco to attend the funeral of his brother's wife's father (personal conversation 2010). It is customary for family members to present *'ie toga* (fine mats) and money to assist in a funeral or with any *fa'alavelave*⁶. ‘Auimatagi arrived with only three very large *'ie toga* to present to the deceased family and to represent his brother as a member of the family through marriage. Prior to the presentations of mats and money to the extended family, ‘Auimatagi asked both his brother and his brother's wife what *'ie toga* and money they had prepared for the funeral. The wife responded that she had prepared many large fine mats and money. ‘Auimatagi refused to take more than three fine mats to present to the extended family. His brother's wife wanted him to present all the mats as a sign of family strength from her husband's *'āiga*, but ‘Auimatagi said that what she was doing was not the “true” *fa'asāmoa*. According to ‘Auimatagi, each fine mat has a significance to the extended family and the extra mats are just more than what is needed. Thus, practice and interpretation of the *fa'asāmoa* by one individual in one part of the world, is not necessarily how it is interpreted by someone in another part. Samoan chiefs and

⁶ *Fa'alavelave* are family responsibilities of giving fine mats or *'ie toga*, monies, time, and service. These events include weddings, funerals, a bestowal of a chiefly title, dedication of churches and houses, celebrations, etc.

adults often say, “*E fesuia’i faiga ae tumau lava le fa’avae*”. Although the foundation and essence of the *fa’asāmoa* remains the same, there are different ways of practicing and interpreting it.

Although there are different ways of understanding the *fa’asāmoa*, Samoan youth born and raised in the diaspora will embrace whatever they are taught as being the “true” culture. There is a willingness by youth in the church to engage in any aspect of the *fa’asāmoa*, even if it is interpreted differently by others. During a focus group discussion in Carson, California, participants revealed that “performative culture” and going through the motions of “trying to act Samoan” played a part in maintaining their Samoan identity.⁷ This was based solely on what they are taught, what they observed, and what is practiced within their individual homes. Youth who participated in the focus group also said that they enjoyed their service to their individual churches because it allows them to embrace their culture more through various chores and church activities, and they do not have to depend so much on language. For the youth there is always the fear of saying or pronouncing anything incorrectly. It is often the case that if an error in language or service occurs, adult practitioners of the *fa’asāmoa* would question their Samoanness. Samoan elders often make comments in order to engage the child to correct their actions for there is a fear that if they were to go outside the context of their local family or church, they would be embarrassed by the child’s lack of knowledge in Samoan chores. The way a Samoan child conducts him or herself in the community is a reflection on their

⁷ On September 14, 2010 a total of eleven Samoan youth and adults met at a local restaurant in Carson, CA for a recorded focus group interview. There were seven females ages 23 to 37 and three males ages 23 to 30. All of the participants are active within their church youth and young adult groups within some form of leadership. They attend congregations affiliated with the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa. A total of four different Samoan congregations were represented, all of which are located in Carson, CA.

family, church, and parents. Regardless of the reaction of parents and elders towards the youth, they continue to embrace their culture as much as they can within the church setting.

During *fa'alavelave* Sāmoa or when in the act of doing chores at a Samoan function, many of the youth born outside of Sāmoa who lack any speaking abilities will often compensate through the act of doing other aspects of the culture that do not require speaking or communicating to an individual of rank. Other youth just do not participate at all. The words muttered in response to an adult's question are often the simple words of 'ioe (yes), *leai* (no) and body language communication and responding by pointing or using signals to indicate an answer. Anyone familiar with the Samoan *fa'alavelave* knows that the tempo of the activity is very fast and the lack of competence in these acts of the *fa'asāmoa* often results in exclusion and ridicule by those carrying out the events. That is why language development is very important if learning other aspects of the culture is desired.

High Talking Chief (*tulāfale*) Fofō Sunia believes that the Samoan language is one of the most precious gifts of Sāmoa (Sunia 2000:365-368). The fine mats, tapa cloth, and genealogies are all aspects of the *fa'asāmoa* that are passed on from one generation to the next. This cannot be done without language. The sharing of these cultural gifts strengthens and encourages the practice of the *fa'asāmoa* for future generations. Although the *fa'asāmoa*, like all cultures, is a process and not a product, the sharing of these gifts indicates its significance to the Samoan people. Having stated that, this research does recognize Hereniko's point that cultural identities are always in a state of becoming, "a journey in which we never arrive" (Hereniko 1999:138). Although culture

evolves and changes, it does not mean that language should be thrown by the way side. Language too is a gift that needs to be passed on to the next generation. It is unfortunate that it is in the state of decline in communities outside of Sāmoa. Competency in the Samoan language will bridge gaps of communication among heritage speakers and this will allow the individual to participate more in cultural functions if he/she chooses so.

With the loss of language competency and the cultural assimilation among Samoan youth, it is tempting to think of this population as somehow less Samoan than their parents. Lesā recognizes that Samoan youth in the diaspora are brought up in the “I-Culture” and the identity has been shaped by the influences of this period, namely the I-pods, I-phones, I-home, I-touch, Myspace, the Internet and modern technology. But he states that although this lifestyle might deter Samoan youth from developing their Samoan cultural identity in-depth, they are still rooted in their Samoan identity. He writes, “while the construction of hybrid identities involve an acceptance of new forms, fashions, and styles, these become an addition of new meaning and new worlds into ones' identity. These new ideas however, can never fill the missing space in the planting of ones roots. Needless to say, a person with a hybrid identity still has his roots” (Lesā 2009:23-24). A well known Samoan community leader who I interviewed stated “we have the ‘Rock’, we have Polamalu. I don’t know if any of these guys speak the language and we can’t say that they are not Samoan if they don’t speak the language” (Peter, interview 2010). There are thousands of Samoans who are rooted in the Samoan identity, and having the ability to speak or not speak does not mean that one is more Samoan than the other.

Interestingly, Samoan language competency is not only eroding in the diaspora among youth but even in American Sāmoa where both English and Samoan are spoken by most adult Samoans. Tagaloa writes that “the command of the Samoan language is diminishing with each generation, not only among Samoan émigrés but also within the motherland as well” (Tagaloa 2008:83). Although a very interesting topic to cover, this research does not address any of those issues in either American Sāmoa or Sāmoa.

In this thesis project I will investigate the suitability of the Samoan church community in addressing the problem of language loss of Samoan youth in the diasporic community of Carson, California. I will also investigate possible programs and activities that may be feasible to initiate within the church community through culturally appropriate means. This project is an initial step to future language programs within the Samoan church community. As a member and leader within this community I see the need for language maintenance, and this project will gain both credibility and significance through leadership, curriculum, and community involvement. In order to accomplish this objective I plan to use the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistic vitality (EV). This framework will be discussed later in this chapter, but the overall goal is to build language vitality within the Samoan community through support at three main levels: geographic support, institutional support, and maintaining status significance within the family and the church community. With the support foundation in place, that is an initial step of a very successful language curriculum. The purpose of this research is to address the current situation of language use within the Samoan community and develop an effective first step curriculum based on a support system through the Samoan churches.

There are existing programs and curricula within the Samoan community throughout the region and abroad on language maintenance and acquisition. This research is not trying to re-invent the wheel; rather I hope to continue the conversation and dialogue in order to provide an environment and an appropriate setting for Samoans who are not familiar with the Samoan language to learn if they so choose. The Samoan Congregational Church in the City of Carson is the setting and context for this research. I have become familiar with the people associated with this church at both the leadership and general membership levels. With that support basis, this research will hopefully serve as one of many avenues of developing the Samoan language for both adults and youth at all levels. This is a project that does not exclude “native” speakers, but it includes everyone in the process of developing language at a more advanced level. The objective of this research is to find effective methods of improving language use, specifically in the diaspora.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The content for this thesis consists of four major areas of research. They are Samoan Christianity, Samoan migration to California, Samoan churches as ‘cultural hubs’ in the diaspora, and language development in the diaspora. Below, I summarize the sources that I consulted throughout the conduct of this thesis. What follows below is an annotated summary of my research literature and their relevance to the different chapters that follow.

Samoan Christianity is a critical topic for this thesis because it sets the context to the attitude many Samoans have towards religion, both in Sāmoa and abroad. I have

included primary sources such as the journals of John Williams (edited by Moyle 1984) and earlier nineteenth century missionaries Turner (1983) and Stair (1983) to provide background on the pre-contact indigenous religions of Sāmoa. Students from the Pacific Theological College in Fiji have written extensively on the indigenous religion (cf Sevaaetasi 1978; Ieremia 1968; Ta'asē 1971; Setu 1988; Vavae 1979) and each thesis provides a thorough context of the transition of Sāmoa to Christianity. Tamasese (2007), Suaalii-Sauni (2008), and Kamu (1996) explore the indigenous religious experience in the context of stories and oral traditions. Both Inglis (1991) and Ta'asē (1971) wrote on the Siovili movement that temporarily influenced parts of Sāmoa. This research on Siovili provides further insight on the role of religion and the transition to Christianity in the Samoan islands.

Much of the research on the works and history of the London Missionary Society (LMS) is taken from Goodall (1954), Faletose (1961), and Tippet (1971). The history, politics, and objectives of the LMS are revealed through these sources and an important context is provided to understand the ministry within Sāmoa and the indigenization of Christianity. Garrett (1982), Roach (1984), Tuimauluga (1977) and Ta'asē (1995) study the evolution of the independent Samoan Congregational Church and its role in Sāmoa following its autonomy from the LMS. Garrett (1982) and Ta'asē (1995) are very thorough in their historical analysis from the period of pre-contact to the 20th century. In addition, Garrett's work is not limited to the church in Sāmoa, but also provides context for church formation throughout the Pacific region. The great schism of the Congregational Christian Church of Sāmoa (CCCS) resulted in the district of American Sāmoa removing themselves from the CCCS and forming their own church body.

Fa'ataa's (1988) analysis of that schism sheds light on the reasons for different congregational churches of both Sāmoa and American Sāmoa that exist in the diaspora. The focus of this research is centered on the Congregational Christian Church in Sāmoa and American Sāmoa. Other denominations and more recent evangelical groups are important within the region but are not emphasized in this thesis.

The Samoan church in the diaspora during the mid twentieth century has been widely studied by Sala (1980) and Ta'asē (1995). Both authors have not only written on the topic of Samoan churches, but they have both served as ministers in Seattle and Los Angeles, respectively. Ablon (1971) writes on the significance of social organizations in the urban Samoan community, specifically the role of the church. A plethora of literature exists on the Congregational Church in both Sāmoa and American Sāmoa, ranging from theses to journals and books. A clear perspective is provided by the literature to show how Samoan religion transitioned from the mid-nineteenth century to what it is today. The literature provides an important insight to understanding religion within the Samoan setting, both in Sāmoa and abroad.

The literature on Samoan migration is set in an appropriate context by the works of Shu (1980), Gershon (2007), and Rolff (1978). These authors focus specifically on the theory of migration and the transition of Samoans into urban areas. Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2009) takes a more in-depth look at the term *malaga* as she explores the concept of migration in the Samoan context. Lee and Francis (2009) also explore Pacific migration and transnationalism. The literature on the Samoan migration is well represented in both New Zealand and the U.S. mainland. From New Zealand, Pitt and Macpherson (1974), Anae (1998), Tiatia (1998), and Fairbairn-Dunlop (1984) look at the process of migration

of Samoans to New Zealand and describe the current status of the New Zealand Samoan community in terms of culture, religion, and social ties within the communities. In the area of religion in the New Zealand context, Tiatia (1998) examines its role in relations to culture and Samoan youth in the diaspora. Through interviews and focus groups Tiatia gives voice to the Samoan youth and their opinions of religion. Anae (1998) also addresses the views of Samoan youth on religion. A section of Anae's thesis is dedicated to the role of the LMS church and its transition into the diasporic church in New Zealand.

The motives and objectives of the Samoan migration to the U.S. mainland are explored by Craig (1990), Ablon (1971), Ahlburg and Levin (1990), Shu (1980), and Fa'aleava (2003). Both Kotcheck (1975) and McGrath (2002) have studied Samoan migration to the Seattle, Washington area. Pouesi (1994), Chen (1973), Shu and Satele (1977), Scull (2004), Lewthwaite, Mainzer, and Holland (1973) look at Samoan migration to Southern California. These studies identify the Samoan communities in Southern California, the transition into an American lifestyle, and the socio-economic issues plaguing the community. The "push" and "pull" factors for the reasons of migration to Southern California are also examined. Ablon (1971) and Janes (1984) studied the Bay Area as another location with a high concentration of Samoan settlement. These Samoan communities outside of the islands are often termed the 'diaspora'. Cohen (1997), Tagaloa (2008), Spickard, Rondilla, and Wright (2002) and Ahlburg and Levin (1990) define the term in depth in the context of the Pacific region. Small (1997) focused on the migration of Tongans to the U.S. mainland. This study contributes to understanding migration through the eyes and lives of Tongan migrants themselves. This

is important because it presents various parallels of the “push” and “pull” migration factors between Pacific island groups.

The literature on Samoan churches as ‘cultural hubs’ in the diaspora overlaps with literature on diasporic and migrant communities. It is careless for any research focused on a diasporic Samoan community to disregard the role of Christianity and the church communities. Taimalelagi (1980) looks at the migrations of Samoans and the formation of the congregational church in areas outside of the islands. Sala (1980), Ta’asē (1995), Antilla (1980), Stepp (1989), Vavae (1979) and Inglis (1991) all look at the formation of Samoan churches in the diaspora, including the history, migration, formation and objectives of these church communities. Sala uses critical lenses to examine the theology of Samoan Christianity among immigrants in the U.S. Setu (1986) looks at the role of the Samoan *faiife’au* (pastor) as leader of the church and speculates on the future of this position. More importantly this research explores the role of the Samoan church as a hub for educating Samoan youth and adults in the ways of the *fa’asāmoa*. Pozzetta (1991) offers examples of other ethnic groups and their formation of the “ethnic” church in order to maintain cultural and language identity. The Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji has produced many theses on the topic of Samoan churches in both Sāmoa and in the diaspora, and that literature has been very helpful in understanding the structure and ideology behind the Samoan theology and its union with the culture. The area of *fa’asāmoa* and its significance in the Samoan society in both the islands and abroad are articulated through the works of Lyons (1980), Sunia (1997), Shore (1982) and Simanu-Klutz (2001). Macpherson & Pitt (1974) and Anae (1998) provide a New Zealand perspective on Samoan churches.

The final component of the literature deals with language development in the diaspora through the cultural hubs or churches. The churches have proven to be an appropriate institution for implementing and practicing the *fa'asāmoa* and heritage language within these “urban villages.” Both Anae (1998) and Lesā (2009) provide indigenous views on the topic. Lesā, in particular, focuses on the language of respect in the Samoan churches in Hawai'i. Through interviews and focus groups, he provides data on the availability and usage of the Samoan language in the local churches from various denominations in Hawai'i and how the church can continue to provide that venue for language development. Mugler and Lynch (1996) and Fairbairn-Dunlop (1984) look at language maintenance with Samoans in New Zealand and how the church has been a big factor in the practice of language. Curricula have also been developed by Hunkin (2009) in New Zealand to assist with language acquisition, more so at the academic level. However this material is very useful for any Samoan language program.

The Samoan language is not the only language in struggle for maintenance in the diaspora. Otsuke and Wong (2007) have investigated the maintenance of the Tokelauan language in Hawai'i. Taumoefolau, Starks, David and Bell (2002) take a broad look at language maintenance within the Pacific communities of Sāmoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, and Niue in New Zealand. In terms of theory on language revitalization, Grenoble and Whaley (2006), Garrett, Coupland and Williams (2003) and Fishman (2006) provide a deeper understanding of why this project is very important to cultural identity and knowledge. Researchers believe that there is a strong link between language and cultural identity, and both Gudykunst (1988) and Johnson (2000) focus on that particular topic. The current Samoan language curricula written by John Mayer are great options to use

for teaching the language within a church setting or any academic environment. Grenoble and Whaley (2006) and Florey (2010) center their research on the case studies of what different communities have implemented to revitalize language. Although the communities will vary in terms of programs implemented for language maintenance, the literature provides a framework that is applicable within all settings. In order to gain more vitality within the ethnolinguistic community, the following literature sheds more light on this topic: Giles et al. (1977), Mugler and Lynch (1996), Johnson, Giles, Bourhis (1983), and Landry and Allard (1994).

The research for this thesis is focused on the role of the *fa'asāmoa* in the lives of Samoans who left Sāmoa to become part of what has been termed the diaspora. In order to maintain their language and cultural protocols, many diasporic communities have been able to form church congregations. The objective of this thesis is to investigate ways to improve the effectiveness of language and cultural maintenance in the diasporic congregations as a method to assist Samoan youth and adults in developing Samoanness through language development. This thesis will contribute to the already extensive body of literature from New Zealand, Sāmoa, and the U.S. mainland that looks at ways to maintain cultural ties and language maintenance in the diaspora.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The notion of 'ethnolinguistic vitality' (EV) is used as the theoretical framework for this thesis. EV was first introduced by Giles et. al. in 1977 in a book entitled *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations* and it is defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within the intergroup setting"

(Giles 1977:308). The concept is based on the notion that the more vitality an ethnolinguistic group has, the more likely the language, ethnicity and intergroup relationship will thrive and survive. In order to be successful in maintaining and practicing one's language, three structural variables must be practiced: *demographic support*, *institutional support* and *social status support*. The main objective of this thesis is to explore the role of the local churches in the diaspora in assisting to maintain, preserve and practice the Samoan language and become a resource for people, both young and old. In addition to language, there is the maintenance of both cultural ethnicity and intergroup relations.

There was a very successful movement in the 1980s allowing heritage groups to revive indigenous languages in New Zealand. The EV framework has been used by some Samoan scholars in New Zealand to introduce an outline of language programs into the school systems (Mugler & Lynch 1996:229-243). The New Zealand Government had been publishing language learning materials in Samoan as early as 1947. Although Sāmoa gained its independence in 1962, New Zealand continued to build educational alliances with the islands, publishing translated novels for teens and grammar books. Shortly after independence, Sāmoa assumed the primary responsibility of providing Samoan language resources for its school system. It was not until 1983 that New Zealand's Department of Education began to resume the production of Samoan material for schools because "Approximately eight percent of all students in New Zealand schools are now of Pacific ancestry, and about half of these are Samoan. After English and New Zealand Māori, Samoan has become New Zealand's most widely spoken Pacific language" (Ministry of Education 2000:4). In 1990 the Samoan language was formally

recognized by the New Zealand school system as part of the general education (Mugler and Lynch 1996:240) and in 1999, the Samoan language would become an official School Certificate subject (Ministry of Education 2000:4). By the end of that same year the Samoan language was offered at major colleges and universities in New Zealand. Unfortunately, Hawai'i and the U.S. mainland have not experienced this type of program. Only very recently the State of Hawai'i implemented the teaching of the Samoan language in two local high schools. This type of vitality proves to be beneficial because it allows for children to be exposed to the language.

The first variable of the EV theoretical framework is *demographic support*. This involves the number of members of a linguistic minority and their distribution within a particular territorial area. If individuals of a minority linguistic community are spread out over a large geographic distance with less frequent interaction, it is more likely that the practice and the maintenance of their language will shift or be lost within that particular context. The dominant majority language such as English will become the standard mode of communication for people within that particular area and there will most often be a gradual but steady erosion of utility of the minority language which will ultimately lead to its loss. Efforts made by a community to utilize demographic support can be a basis for maintaining the language. The most obvious example of a successful use of language is if it is in the majority. The 'homeland' obviously uses the language more than in any location. But that does not necessarily mean that everyone in that location can speak a particular language. There are cases of Samoan youth who live in Sāmoa but are very limited in their speaking of the language. There must be a constant effort by parents and guardians to teach and practice language in order for it to be the primary mode for

communication. The same is the case in the diaspora, the location of Samoans within a close geographic location is good, but without the personal initiative to push for language maintenance, the efforts of maintaining vitality through close geographic location is useless.

In Sāmoa there is a close proximity between each *fale* (house). This closeness engages people in communication and the perfecting of the language at all levels (*gagana fa'aaloalo* and *gagana ta'atele*). The social links and interaction in the diaspora plays a major role in practicing language as well. The spatial separateness of Samoan families can result in the lack of language use (cf Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984:103; Mugler & Lynch 1996:230). On the other hand the tendency of many Samoans to settle into a particular geographic area enables families to establish social networks within the community. This results in more opportunities to practice and speak the language.

The second variable of the ethnolinguistic vitality framework is *institutional support*. This support can be represented at two levels, informal support and formal support. Informal support refers to the grassroots efforts of implementing programs to safeguard ethnolinguistic interests at both the state and private levels. Formal support would come from people who have gained a position of control, and are able to make decisions that will implement a language program within any industry, e.g. business, religion, mass media, etc.

The New Zealand Department of Education and government is a perfect example of language maintenance through institutional support. Of course there are many factors that differ between New Zealand and the United States; for one, Pacific Islanders are not a very well represented minority group in the U.S. In New Zealand, the efforts were

pushed from an informal setting of support by ‘pressure groups’ that made their voices heard as a growing Pacific Island community in New Zealand. At this level, many churches and social organizations were successful in pushing forward an initiative to implement a language program that would assist Samoan youth born in the New Zealand.

At the formal level, one group in particular has been very successful in New Zealand, the church. The support from the Samoan congregation leadership (*toea’ina* and *fai’fe’au*) was able to push programs within various parishes to assist Samoan youth and adults to learn the language and the culture. At this formal level, those in leadership were able to make critical decisions regarding language maintenance (McGrath 2002:328-330; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984:107). During a recent Fulbright-Hays research trip to Sāmoa in the summer of 2010, I spoke with one of the instructors about the use of language among Samoan youth in New Zealand. In the previous year, the instructor said that a *malaga* (trip) of his family traveled to Sāmoa from New Zealand for vacation. In the *fa’asāmoa*, it is often customary for people within the village to welcome the visiting group to Sāmoa and to show hospitality. The villagers or family in Sāmoa would often prepare food and gifts for their visit; and it is often customary for the receiving family to *folafola* (verbally acknowledge) the gifts and food that is presented. The instructor said that his nephews from New Zealand were all born and raised outside of Sāmoa, but the way they presented the *folafola* was as if they had lived in Sāmoa all their lives. Their use of language, tone, and proverbial sayings were perfect. They also knew their ‘space’ and ‘place’ within the Samoan hierarchical seating within the family house. In New Zealand, the family and the institution of the church assisted these young boys in maintaining the *fa’asāmoa* in language and culture. Thus, institutional support does

assist in maintenance of language and culture. This research will later examine how this kind of institutional support is implemented in the U.S. churches, specifically the Congregational Church, and its effectiveness in doing so.

The third and final variable of the ethnolinguistic vitality is the *social status support* or the “‘prestige’ of the linguistic group in the intergroup context along certain dimensions: economic, social, sociohistorical, and linguistic” (Gruyter 1994:5). The prestige of a language and culture will obviously elevate the priority and use of that language. Many of the foreign languages used within the context of the U.S. education system are typically the more “prestigious” and widely used languages such as French, Spanish, German, and many East-Asian languages. The Pacific Island languages are not as prestigious or in demand, and although significant within its context among its people, these are not languages with status within the world context. In terms of economic status, groups with a low economic placement will typically shift towards the majority language. This is often associated with both academic and economic success. Researchers have concluded that in geographic locations where monolingualism is the norm, heritage language maintenance is more difficult as opposed to communities where bi- and multilingualism is normal (Mugler & Lynch 1996:237).

Although the status of the Pacific Island languages will most likely change within the larger intergroup context, there are certain social and community avenues that can be implemented to prioritize language within the heritage community. The Samoan churches can prioritize the status of the language through various programs. The church services, Bible study, Sunday school, and various programs can be conducted in the Samoan language. This community setting can become a way of promoting language and

culture among peoples who have interest in understanding and engaging in language development. In New Zealand for example, it is important to mention that the status of the language has gained priority in the Samoan churches. Mothers within these congregations organized and initiated *Ā'oga Amata*, a Samoan program for early childhood preschools. This program did a lot to elevate the status of the Samoan language within the Samoan community, and ultimately in the eyes of the New Zealand government. The church continues to provide a place for the language, and regardless of the location of the Samoan church there is continual amount of exposure to language and culture.

METHODOLOGY

There are currently twelve churches associated with the Congregational Church of American Sāmoa in Southern California. The Southern California district is comprised of three sub-districts or *pulega*. Each *pulega* has one *toe'aina* or elder pastor responsible for the congregations under his leadership. Rather than interview each *faife'au* from each of the twelve congregations, I contend that the related themes extracted from various congregation members, both youth and adults, will serve as a significant guide to understanding the overall objectives and goals of the congregational churches. However it is important to note that this research is limited in its findings to only the Samoan Congregational Christian Church denomination. Although other denominations such as the Methodists and Catholics are engaging this topic, this thesis will focus on primarily one denomination. The methodologies I used for this thesis are: review the literature on

Sāmoa, the church, and the diaspora; conduct *talanoaga* and interviews and focus groups, and observation by personal participation.

Literature

The four areas of research for this thesis include Samoan Christianity, Samoan Migration to California, Samoan churches as ‘cultural hubs’, and heritage language development in the diaspora. These themes were thoroughly researched from literature available at the Hawaiian and Pacific Collection at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Graduate research books, papers, theses, dissertations, government documents, conference presentations, language curricula from New Zealand and the U.S. and various academic articles were all consulted in order to gain background information on these topics. The literature provided context to engage interviewees in discussions on areas pertaining to the themes of this research. In addition to academic literature, I was able to research church related materials published by the Congregational Church of American Sāmoa and other Samoan denominations.

Talanoaga⁸

The method of *talanoa* is a very non-western approach of data collection and research. *Talanoa* literally means to “talk” or to “discuss” in Fijian, Samoan and Tongan. This Pacific Island approach was first introduced by Dr. Sitiveni Halapua following the May 2000 coup in Fiji. The *Talanoa* session was an indigenous approach to bringing together political opponents, religious leaders, former hostages, and coup supporters to discuss ways of rebuilding the national unity of Fiji. Several researchers have since used this method to research and discuss topics in either an informal or formal manner. The

⁸ *Talanoaga* is the nominative form of the verb *talanoa*.

face-to-face discussions take place in a setting that is reflective of simply talking story about issues and topics without the pressure of maintaining research protocol. Former Center of Pacific Islands Studies student Laura Fepulea'i defines the research method of *talanoa* as "to talk freely without formal constraints where conversations are expressed freely without any particular agenda, nor recorded minutes as in meetings and seminars practiced in the West" (Fepulea'i 2005:18).

The *talanoa* approach was for data collection. The *faiʻeʻau* and *matai* (chief) that I interviewed felt that it was much easier for them to use the *talanoa* approach of simply talking story. I chose not to record the conversations. I felt that that would make the conversations much more formal than I had wanted them to be. Much of our conversations were conducted over coffee and there was a free flow to our discussions.

Interview/Focus Group

The second method of data collection used was a more formal approach of personal interviews and one focus group. The interviews were conducted with a diverse group of adults and youth. The adults consisted of *faiʻeʻau*, *toeʻaina faiʻeʻau*, and other leaders within the congregational church. With the exception of only a few interviewees, all the adults were born in Sāmoa. One of the *faiʻeʻau* interviewed is affiliated with the Assembly of God (AOG) Church in Carson, CA. This research is centered on the Congregational Church; however, the perspective of the *faiʻeʻau* from the AOG gives another leadership point of view regarding language and cultural use within the church setting. The single focus group consisted of eleven Samoan youth from the local congregational churches in Los Angeles. The dynamics of the interviews and interview group were very interesting because it was a mix of youth and adults born in Sāmoa and

youth and adults born in the U.S. Their ideas of culture and language varied and for this reason I tried to provide a variety of backgrounds in terms of sex, age, and church affiliation.

Personal Participation

An additional method of data collection was my experience and life as part of the congregational church. I was raised within the congregational church since I was a child. Although my personal participation is subjective, it provides an insider's point of view for understanding the literature and the interviews. Although I have been exposed to the worship liturgy of other denominations, the congregational church is what I know best. For four years of my life I was educated at the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS) in American Sāmoa. KFTS is the largest church in American Sāmoa with every village having its own congregation. In the diaspora, the original church established was congregational. My personal experience also allowed me to produce a language curriculum that fits the needs of the community; since I am involved, I am in a position to follow up and adjust programs as needed. This is a project that will not only contribute to academia, but it will meet the needs of a community ready to engage language and culture.

CHAPTER TWO

SAMOAN BACKGROUND AND MIGRATION

SAMOAN BACKGROUND

The islands of Sāmoa are a chain of islands situated about 2,300 miles southwest of Hawai'i and 1,800 miles northeast of New Zealand. The east-west axis extends about 225 miles, and lies between 173 degrees and 168 degrees longitude (Shu 1980:35). The islands were divided into two political entities in 1900 with the eastern islands occupied by the United States of America as it remains today, and the western islands being controlled by Germany for fourteen years until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. New Zealand took control of the western islands in 1914 as sanctioned by the League of Nations until Samoa's independence in 1962 (Meleiseā 1987:87-88; Shu 1980:48; Shaffer 2000:111). American Sāmoa is made up of the seven islands of the unincorporated and unorganized territory of the U.S. American Sāmoa consists of *Tutuila, Aunu'u, Ta'ū, Olosega, Ofu*, and the coral atolls of Rose Island and Swains Island. The western islands often referred to today as independent Sāmoa consists of nine islands, four of which are inhabited: *Upolu, Savai'i, Manono* and *Apolima* (Fa'aleava 2003:12).

The islands of Sāmoa fall within the geographical area of Polynesia, one of several island groups that make up this region. Many have called Sāmoa the 'Cradle of Polynesia' based on the theory that Samoans later journeyed outward and occupied islands throughout the region. Some scholars ardently believe that Samoans from Savai'i Island departed from different points and settled Tahiti, the Marquesas and Hawai'i.

Archaeological findings at one particular island in Tonga suggest Samoan settlement as well. The settlement by Samoans in the Pacific has resulted in variations of the name of Savai'i island: Havai'i in Hawai'i and Havaiki in the Society Islands. Savai'i is also said to be the legendary island of Hawaiki, the original home of the Polynesians (Shaffer 2000:38; Russell 1961:9,10; American Sāmoa Humanities Council 2009:26). Another name used to describe Sāmoa is the 'Navigators Islands'. The first European to sight the islands was Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen in 1722, followed by French navigators Louis Antoine de Bougainville in 1768 and La Perouse in 1787. The French explorer Bougainville was impressed by the navigation skills the Samoans had. To their surprise they observed how Samoans were handling their canoes and the great distance from land they would travel. Bougainville later coined the term 'Archipelago of the Navigators' to describe Sāmoa. The more common term used to name the group is 'Navigators Islands' (Moyle 1984:67; Turner 1861[1984]:2; American Sāmoa Humanities Council 2009:62,63).

It is important to note that the peoples of the Pacific Islands will most likely define their historical genealogies differently. What is interpreted in Sāmoa is probably not the case in other islands. Kirch (2000:6-10) does not only use one method of studying the history of the region, rather he uses linguistic, human biological, and cultural variations within Oceania to define and interpret the peoples of the Pacific and their past.

The language of Sāmoa is part of the Polynesian branch within the Austronesian language family.⁹ Other related Polynesian languages within the region include Maori,

⁹ Archeological evidence suggests that the Austronesian-speaking family originates from coastal China some 8,000 years ago. The Oceanic languages are from the "Proto Austronesian" branch and that broke off

Hawaiian, Tahitian, and Tongan. The Samoan language is divided into three stratified levels: *gagana ta'atele* (everyday language), *gagana fa'aaloalo* (respect language), and *gagana a matai* (chiefly language) (Simanu 2002:77-79). All three varieties of language are important cultural indicators of traditional Samoan society and of all the languages of Polynesia, Samoan and Tongan are among the most stratified of the region (Lesā 2009:32).

The *gagana ta'atele* is defined by Simanu (2002) as everyday language used by adults and children. This is communication in an informal context that requires no formalities in terms of word use and respectful protocol. Within this category Simanu briefly discusses the use of *tautala lelei* or 'good language' as opposed to *tautala leaga* or 'bad language'. 'Good language' is associated with the use of the *t*-style, whereas the *k*-style is associated with 'bad language'. An example of the use of the *t*-style is in the following greeting: *Tālofa lava, Pita. 'O ā mai lou Tinā?* Translated: Greetings Pita. How is your mother? The use of the 'bad language' *k*-style would be *Kālofa lava, Pika. 'O ā mai lou Kinā?* The *t*-style was used by missionaries to translate the Bible, hymnals and is used in government, education, writing, and television. The *k*-style is used more in an intimate, casual, and family speech setting (Mayer 2001:95-96). Samoans categorize *t*-style as "formal" and the *k*-style as "colloquial".

Almost 90% of casual speech and most traditional oration take place using the colloquial forms of Samoan, or the *k*-style (Mayer 2001:58). In the Samoan educational system, Sunday school and church education the *t*-style is often used. What is considered "proper" Samoan writing is always done using *t*-style and this begins at an early age.

some 6,000 years ago. The Samoan language is of the East Malayo-Polynesian subgroup, one being South Halmahera-West New Guinea and the other being Oceanic (Florey 2010:15).

This emphasis on the *t*-style as proper has a lot to do with the theory that during the time of contact the *t*-style was the spoken language (Mayer 2001:80, 82). The shift from the *t*-style to the *k*-style was problematic for the LMS missionaries because of the extensive work they had already done on the language. Mayer writes, “missionaries therefore considered the *k*-style to be a corruption of the language . . . From the viewpoint for the missionary, the *t*-style became known as *tautala lelei* ‘good speech’, while the *k*-style was referred to as *tautala leaga* ‘bad speech’ (Mayer 2001:86). Pratt also writes, “In Hawaii they have changed the *t* into *k*, and *ng* into *n*. Thus *tangata* has become *kanaka*. Samoans are doing the same thing at the present time, to the great injury of the language” (Pratt 1893[1984]:vi). The origin of the use of the *k*-style is unknown and many theories exist.

Although many *matai* that I have observed use the *k*-style for Samoan cultural speeches, the *t*-style can also be used. In a conversation with a chief many years ago regarding the use of the *t*-style and the *k*-style in ceremonial speech, he responded that the *k*-style flows much better than the *t*-style. Both the *t*-style and the *k*-style have its context for use within the Samoan community, church, and *fa’asāmoa*. The use of the *t*-style is highly encouraged and expected by those in church ministry and education; to use the *k*-style by these leaders is frowned upon. Village chiefs and the community are not held to the same standards. Although the *k*-style is considered ‘bad speech’, I would venture to say that that rhetoric has been used by early missionaries and continues to impact Samoan speech today.

The *gagana fa’aaloalo* (respect language) builds upon the *gagana ta’atele* as a very formal and respectful approach to speaking. The common vocabulary of the *gagana*

ta'atele is replaced with more polite and respectful words. Lesā (2009:37) states “*Gagana Faaaloalo*, is a way of speaking that combines both linguistic and non-linguistic elements into elaborate and careful ways of speaking. It is marked by changes in posture, distance, and eye contact, as well as strict adherence to linguistic form, which includes specialized vocabulary, more formal grammatical structure, and changes in tone and volume.” If I were to ask a child, Where did you go? I would say, “’*O fea sā ‘e alu ‘i ai?*” The word *alu* (go) is changed to a more formal word when addressing an elder, clergy, *matai*, or adult. I would say, “’*O fea sā ‘e susū ‘i ai?*” The *susū* (go) is a more respectful word to use in this context. This Samoan respect language is important especially among Samoan youth. Samoan adults often say ‘*E iloagofie le tama ma le teine Sāmoa ‘ua uma ona a’oaia*, “One can easily notice which Samoan boys and girls that are properly trained.” Adults are referring to the use of the *gagana fa’aaloalo* and the respectful manner in which Samoan youth present themselves.

The *gagana a matai* (chiefly language) is a very highly specialized speech used in traditional Samoan ceremonies (e.g. ‘*ava* ceremony, funeral, weddings, chief title bestowal, etc.). This language is often used by the Samoan *tulāfale* (orator) and *ali’i* (chiefs), and those who attain a *matai* title are also expected to be well versed in this language. The characteristics of the *gagana a matai* is the use of proverbs, genealogies, references to historical events, and biblical quotes (Mayer 1999:185). The chiefly language is also used by many clergy. During my training at the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary, we were taught to become well versed in the *gagana a matai* because of the interactions with *matai* in the villages. When addressing the village, a *faife’au* (pastor) is expected to know the *fa’alupega* (honorifics) of villages and know a combination of both

biblical and proverbial quotes so that he can effectively use the *gagana a matai* for a range of purposes.

The introduction of Christianity in 1830 did not change the importance of language stratification in fact it solidified it and expanded it with the use of the *t*-style. The *t*-style was the written language and was used to translate the Bible. Since it became the way to communicate to God, it became the ‘good language’ or *tautala lelei*. Following the establishment of the church in 1830, Samoan society generally began to function socially at three levels, the ‘*āiga* (family), the *nu’u* (village), and the *lotu* (church). The foundation of the family is the ‘*āiga potopoto* or the extended family. This construct is not limited to the immediate family of only the father, mother, and siblings. Rather it includes a “wider family group of blood and marriage relations, in-laws and their families, and even those who may not be related as such” (Kamu 1996:39). The leader of this ‘*āiga* is the *matai* (chief) who is conferred a *suafa* (chiefly title). Prior to the arrival of the missionaries, the *matai* played a major role as a family priest who interceded with the family gods in times of trouble or adversity (Grattan 1948[1985]:135). The *suafa* is more than a name, it is a title based on history, dignity, and of village legends and stories. Each title has specific meaning with family clans because it has the essence of a deified ancestor. The titles are either passed through *faiā* (connection through descent roots) or in some cases to individuals who are not blood related.

Those who are bestowed a *suafa* have served (*tautua*) the ‘*āiga*. *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* is Samoan meaning the “path to power is serving others.” Service to your family is very important within the Samoan ‘*āiga*. The *tautua fa’asāmoa* is service to

village, *matai*, church, and *‘āiga* by preparing meals for *matai*, providing *‘ie toga* and monies, and to serve and support ones *matai* in all requests (Simanu 2002:108; Kamu 1996:41; Fiauai and Tuimaliifano 1997:7; Lesā 2009:41). The responsibility of the *matai* will vary from family to family, but the overall role is to oversee all affairs of the *‘āiga* and represent the family publically and in the village council (*fono*) meetings. The village or *nu’u* setting is obviously not present in the diaspora, but the practice of the *matai* system is just as strong and accessible as it is in Sāmoa. As will be explored further in the following sections, the Samoan church community in the diaspora has assumed the role of both church and *nu’u*, for Samoans are no longer living in their home villages in Sāmoa.

The Samoan village is defined by its honorifics or its *fa’alupega*. The *fa’alupega* is a formalized greeting of all *matai* within the village, and through these honorifics the traditional history of kinship, social and political status are revealed (Tuimauluga 1977:40). The *fa’alupega* places the *matai* within the hierarchical status within the village *fono* (village council) and within the *itūmālō* (district). In Meleiseā’s *Lagaga* (1987:28) he takes a more indepth point of view and defines the *fa’alupega* as ‘constitution’ to village *fono* (council of chiefs). Within the village structure each group has a responsibility in supporting the *nu’u* (village), and the *fa’alupega* does serve as a guideline to position people according to their rank. The most respected group within the Samoan *nu’u* is the council of *matai*. These individuals are responsible for passing rules and regulations within the village in order to maintain peace, harmony, and accountability at all levels. The *matai* also have their own hierarchical position where other *matai* are more senior and more prominent than some *matai*. Under the leadership of the *matai* are

the *aumaga* or *taule'ale'a* (untitled men). The leadership status within the *aumaga* is contingent on the *matai* title of their father or close relative within in the village council. That is also the case within the Women's Committee. The *aumaga* play a very pivotal role within the village setting because they are responsible for carrying out the instructions of the *matai*, maintain family lands including farming, and are the *itū malosi o le nu'u*, the strength of the village. The *aumaga* are able to gain status as *matai* as a result of their *tautua* or service within the village community.

A third group is the *aualuma*. The unmarried girls and girls within the village whose husbands are not of a *matai* status are within this category. Their responsibilities will vary within the village, namely entertainment and ceremonial functions for special guests (Shu 1980:141). The Women's Committee and the *faletua* and *tausi* within the village is comprised of wives. The wives of chiefs are called *faletua*, the wives of orators are call *tausi*. This committee of *faletua* and *tausi* play a very important role directing the *aualuma* and following through with laws and regulations discussed by village chiefs.

With the introduction of the church institution, the village structure has been mirrored within the *lotu* (church). The *faiife'au* has been given the status of high chief. The *fa'alupega* within the church initially recognizes the *faiife'au*, followed by the chairman of the church and officers (e.g. assistant chairman, secretary, and treasurer), then deacons and their wives, and other *matai* present. *Matai* titles are recognized within the congregational church, but a deacon who is part of the congregation is given greater status because of his membership within the church hierarchy. The *faletua* and *tausi* are associated with the Women's Fellowship a part of the church. Both the young women and men play a major role in supporting the church in all functions, as practiced within

the village. The following parallel in village and church structures was prepared by Taule'ale'ausumai (Tiatia 1998:22):

Village Structure:

Tu'ua (high chief)
Matai Council
Faletua ma tausī (wives)
Taulealea (untitled)
Aualuma/aumaga (young women/men)
Children

Church Structure:

Minister
Elders session
Women's fellowship
Young families
Youth group/Autalavou
Sunday school

The qualities of the *matai* are of power, prestige, and privilege as the leader of the 'āiga *potopoto*. This individual is given the responsibility to provide for the family and serve in a very loyal and respectful manner. In return, the *matai* evokes responses of loyalty, honor, service and commitment from the 'āiga (Ta'asē 1995:24-25). This loyalty towards one's *matai* has been the avenue for much growth in certain congregations in the diaspora. Often a *matai* will call upon his or her families to support a particular congregation or church sect. The same concept of *matai* loyalty is very evident in Sāmoa. In a conversation, an instructor from the Piula Theological College in Sāmoa, Rev. Mose Mailo, pointed out that in his village of Faleasi'u his grandfather was *sa'o*¹⁰ of his 'āiga. As staunch members of the Methodist Church, Mailo's grandfather made the decree to the extended family that every member of the 'āiga will attend the village Methodist Church. This was done without any questioning of authority. When Mailo's grandfather passed away, his father became the next *sa'o* and he became more sensitive towards religious freedom. He opened up the opportunity for the family to attend any

¹⁰ The *sa'o* is the lead *matai* or chief over other family chiefs within a certain clan. This individual is the senior title holder among other family clans.

church denomination they prefer. According to Mailo, the family is still a strong and close *‘āiga*, but they practice different religious forms of worship now.

The *fa’asāmoa* embodies the Samoan identity that is dependent on *aganu’u* (culture) and *gagana* (language). The *aganu’u* is part of the social life “associated with dignity and respectful deference” (Shore 1982:221). Without the essence of *aganu’u* there is no proper use of *gagana*. The *aganu’u* reminds individuals their role within Samoan society. In addition, if *aganu’u* is practiced this should prompt the individual of the appropriate language to use within family, village, community or any setting with other Samoans present. It is very difficult for a Samoan to be individually oriented, according to Tiatia. She recognizes that *fa’asāmoa* “includes not only the unwritten traditions which are the core of the oral culture but also the social ethics and protocol of day to day activity, and the responsibilities and values which make Samoans unique” (Tiatia 1998:21). This has resulted in different ways of defining who a Samoan is and how *fa’asāmoa* should be practiced. The *gagana* (language) is also an important factor of *fa’asāmoa*. The language in its richness provides an avenue of expression through speaking, singing, and the practice of culture. As previously stated the *gagana* is expressed in three forms, but with the arrival of the missionaries and the new teachings there has been an emphasis on ‘speaking well’ with the use of the *t*-style as oppose to ‘speaking bad’ with the *k*-style.

One aspect of the *fa’asāmoa* that is universal and practiced by many in both *aganu’u* and *gagana* is the commitment to God. The acceptance of the Good News has positioned Sāmoa as one of the most Christian nations in the entire Pacific region. The national motto of Sāmoa is *Fa’avae i le Atua Sāmoa* – Sāmoa is founded on God. The

motto of American Sāmoa as printed on their national emblem is *Ia Muamua le Atua* – Place God First. With the introduction of Christianity a union between the *aganu'u* (culture), *gagana* (language), and *lotu* (church) plays a major role in the lives of the people of these islands.

SĀMOA AND CHRISTIANITY

The first recorded European contact with Sāmoa was in 1722 by the Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen. For the next century Sāmoa had only sporadic contact with whalers and explorers. The main influence of European impact occurred after 1830 with the arrival of London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary John Williams on the *Messenger of Peace*. Williams was accompanied by one other European missionary named Charles Barff, six Tahitian teachers, and two Aituakians.¹¹ Two Samoans who were in Tonga and willing to assist with the evangelization of the islands also accompanied Williams. The LMS ministry had been present in the Pacific as early as 1797 in Tahiti and Rarotonga. During this period in England transformations were taking place in education, in factories, and in prisons. It also marked the abolition of the English slave trade. Within four decades, eight major British missionary societies were formed to address humanitarian and religious projects.¹² The London Missionary Society was established in 1795 and two years later the LMS missionaries would set sail from England on the *Duff* and travel to Tahiti, in its first attempt at establishing the Protestant

¹¹ Tahitian: Moea, Boti, Arue, Taihaere, Taatu Ori, Umia; Aitutakians: Teava and Taatone; Samoan: Faueā and wife Puaseisei (cf. Garrett 1982:122; Faletese 1961:13; Simanu 2001:627).

¹² The following British missionary societies were established: 1786, Dr. Coke's Wesleyan mission; 1792, Baptist Missionary Society; 1795, London Missionary Society; 1796, Edinburgh Missionary Society; 1799, Church Missionary Society; 1799, Religious Tract Society; 1804, British and Foreign Bible Society; and 1813, Wesleyan Missionary Society (Goodall 1954:2).

church in the Pacific (Tippett 1971:228). The writings and reports of both James Cook and William Bligh on the Pacific had informed people of England about the region, and the descriptions by Bligh on culture, language and vocabulary were used by the missionaries to research the people of Otaheite (Tahiti). In addition, James Morrison's¹³ detailed journal on Tahitian life and politics and Peter Heywood's Tahitian-English vocabulary would be very useful to the first evangelical mission to the South Seas as early as 1796 (Maxton 2010:4-6). Three decades after establishing missionary presence in the eastern Pacific, the LMS was ready to expand its activities to the Samoan Islands.

Samoan society prior to the arrival of Christianity always maintained spirituality at a high level. There was always recognition of superior divinities and many of the gods appeared in visible incarnation. Each family, village, or district in Sāmoa would venerate particular living organisms as gods. The gods of "Old Sāmoa" were incarnated in both animate and inanimate objects. Animate objects could include common fish, birds and animals such as: eels, octopuses, turtles, owls, and pigeons. Inanimate objects could include: shells, stones, the moon, stars, and clouds (Inglis 1991:60; Turner 1861[1984]:17; Grattan 1948:131). These personal deities were associated with an individual from birth and were venerated by that person throughout his or her life. Turner (1861[1984]:17) states "A man would eat freely of what was regarded as the incarnation of the god of another man, but the incarnation of his own particular god he would consider it death to injure or to eat." According to Grattan there were four classes of gods the ancient Samoans worshiped. The first class was the *atua*. These were the

¹³ James Morrison and Peter Heywood both served on the *Bounty* under the leadership of William Bligh in Tahiti in the late 18th century. They were put on trial for participating in the mutiny on the *Bounty*. Both Morrison and Heywood were later found not guilty of their participation in the mutiny and resumed their careers in the Royal Navy (Maxton 2010:6-7).

original gods that dwelled in the heavens. The *atua* Tagaloa-a-lagi was the Samoan Supreme Being that created the peace and harmony that held the balance of peace for all Samoans. The second class was the deified spirits of chiefs or *tupua*. The third order was the *aitu*. These gods were both family gods and village war gods. Some of the most notable *aitu* are *Saveasi'uileo*, Lord of *Pulotu* or the underworld, and his daughter *Nafanua*, the famous goddess of war. The last class was called *sauali'i*. These spiritual beings were of an inferior order of spirits and were often malevolent and causing sickness or misfortune (Grattan 1948:130-133; Tippet 1971:159).

In 1830, one powerful *matai* in Sāmoa, Tamafaigā, claimed to possess spiritual powers. Williams and his crew considered this individual as a possible impediment to the spread of the Gospel; however upon arrival, the Samoan Faueā was told that Tamafaigā had just been killed. William's journal entry (Moyle 1984:69) records "When Fauea heard that Tamafaigna was dead he exclaimed Ua lotu lo tatou enua ua mate a Debalos. The devil is dead our land will embrace the new religion." This was the beginning of the spread of the Gospel throughout Sāmoa. Faueā¹⁴, who had been impressed with the Wesleyan Methodist church in Tonga, was very influential to the establishment of the LMS mission (Garrett 1982:84). He was not only a man of chiefly status, but his blood ties to the reigning Paramount Chief of Sāmoa Malietoa Vai'inupō¹⁵ ensured an easy acceptance of the new religion. The village of Sāpapāli'i in Savai'i was

¹⁴ Faueā had been living in Tonga and Fiji for more than ten years. Davidson records that Faueā had been exiled from Sāmoa. He would prove to be an asset to the beginning of the LMS ministry in Sāmoa. In 1843, Faueā was bestowed the *ali'i* title of Mulipola from Salua, Manono (Davidson 1970:69).

¹⁵ Malietoa Vai'inupō later changed his name to Malietoa Tavita (David) following his conversion. The war of 1830 was one of succession. It was his attempt to gain the four paramount titles (*pāpā*) of Tuiatua, Tuia'ana, Gato'aitele and Tamasoāli'i. The holder of the four titles is recognized as *tafa'ifā*, and would reign as Paramount Chief throughout Sāmoa. In 1841 on his deathbed, Malietoa announced that the *tafa'ifā* title will die with him to prevent further war in Sāmoa. The literatures recognizes two spellings of Malietoa's name, Vai'inupō and Vainu'upō.

the seat of power of the reigning Malietoa, and in August of 1830 the LMS vessel the *Messenger of Peace* anchored at that village.

The introduction of the new religion and ideology, surprisingly did not cause change to the existing social and political structure of Sāmoa. It was a new theology and religion, but “in the final analysis it changed amazingly little that was fundamental in Samoan society” (Grattan 1948:128). Many of the basic tenets of ancient *fa’asāmoa* were similar to that of Christianity, including *fa’aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (mercy or love), *fa’amagalo* (forgiveness), and *tautua* (selfless service) (Lesā 2009:57). Grattan (1948:127) states that the new faith was not immediately accepted throughout Sāmoa since it needed to be discussed in village *fono* (meetings). Although there were some villages and districts that remained aloof from this conversion, Christianity spread rapidly throughout the islands.

There are many reasons for the rapid conversion to Christianity by the people of Sāmoa. One of the most notable reasons is based on the oral tradition of the warrior goddess Nāfanua. This warrior successfully fought a war in which she had gained control of all political authority. Nāfanua gave the *mālō* (governance) and titles to the important and powerful district of A’ana and its allies. When Mālietoa Fitiseanu later arrived to ask for portion of the *mālō*, Nāfanua replied that she had already given the *mālō* away, but she uttered the following prophetic statement: *E tali i lagi lou mālō*, your kingdom will come from heaven. Two generations later, the *Messenger of Peace* arrived at the village of Fitiseanu’s successor Malietoa Vai’inupō. Many interpreted the arrival of Williams and his missionaries as fulfillment of the prophecy to the Mālietoa family (Meleiseā 1987:13; Anae 1998:89; Lesā 2009:56).

It should be noted that there were also personal and political reasons for the conversion by the Paramount Chief. Williams noted in his journal other reasons for the conversion. He writes, “Some no doubt think that by embracing Christianity, vessels will be induced to visit them & by that means their country will be enriched. Others think that it will give them a name among their country men. Some think by becoming Christians they will be protected from the effects of the anger of their gods. Others hope by the same means to prolong their lives. Some hope that by the introduction of Christianity war will be entirely abolished” (Moyle 1984:280-281).

Williams’ journal also records Faueā’s persuasive approach of introducing the Good News. Part of Faueā’s first sermon is as follows: “Can the religion of these wonderful papalangis be anything but wise and good. Let us look at them, and then look at ourselves; their heads are covered, while ours are exposed to the heat of the sun, and the wet of the rain; their bodies are clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waist; they have clothes upon their very feet, while ours are like the dogs’; and then look at their axes, their scissors, and their other property, how rich they are!” (Williams 1837:86). Although Williams mentions many reasons for the conversion to Christianity, he does see a potential for a strong ministry. This was a ministry that would be so successful that it would later evangelize other parts of Polynesia and Melanesia.

Williams’ initial trip to Sāmoa was very brief, but he did promise to return within a year with more teachers. Upon his arrival in 1832, he was impressed with the spread of the Gospel throughout the island and from Savai’i to Manu’a, many people were exposed to this introduced religion. According to statistics, in 1837, there were only 117 people

converted. By 1839, a total of 1,209 Samoans began to serve in the ministry (Vavae 1979:62). With a new religion came new worship practices. New temples were built to honor the new God within the villages. Every ceremony that was practiced in Sāmoa would begin and end with a Christian form of prayer. In addition, Sundays became the *Aso Sā* or sacred day. The Samoan society would become very rule-bound and the teaching of the Bible became a priority within Sāmoa, with evening curfews later implemented in order for families to conduct evening prayers. This would be one way of maintaining the Christian doctrine and these were ideals that were common with early Samoan migrants who traveled abroad.

With the spread of the Gospel in Sāmoa, the LMS introduced a key figure into the village social structure, the *faiife'au*, pastor. These new village leaders would take the place of family priests and village prophets of the ancient Samoan religion and become local mediators to the spiritual world (Garrett 1982:124). The word *faiife'au* is an innovation of both the church and the *fa'asāmoa*, and it is not entirely clear as to the time of its initial use. The word is derived from a verb "*fai feau*" which literally means to 'to wait on or to serve'. To train the Samoan *faiife'au*, the LMS established Malua Theological Seminary in 1844. Samoan men were equipped with the skills to "teach, to heal, to plan and to create a new person and a new community for God" (Setu 1988:103). As educated men within the village the *faiife'au* were honored as representatives of God and trained to provide spiritual guidance and act as a bridge to the new world and religion of the *papālagi*.

The relationship that a village or congregation has with a *faiife'au* is one that is based on the Samoan concept of *feagaiga* or covenant. It is a relationship that is rooted

in the family covenant between brother and sister. In *fa'asāmoa* the relationship between brother and sister is very unique and special. The eldest sister has the special divine power for blessing and cursing, and she is recognized as “*Tama Sā*” (sacred child) and/or “*Ilamutu*” (a person with supernatural power). Men are vulnerable, both spiritually and socially, through their sisters. Schoeffel (Huntsman 1995:88) writes “girls are given more comfortable sleeping quarters, and the household division of labour between male and female adolescents ideally allocates light, indoor work to girls and heavy, outdoor work to boys”. With the introduction of the *faiife'au*, a new extension of the *feagaiga* or covenant was introduced in Sāmoa, this time it was between the pastor and his *nu'u* (village). Similar in structure to the covenant between brother and sister, the pastor was given the power over the spiritual well being of the village. The village, like the brother, was responsible for protecting, honoring, and providing for the *faiife'au*. The honorific title of the *faiife'au* today is “*fa'afeagaiga*” or “the covenant one”. His position within the congregation and community has been elevated to a status of “God’s Servant” and he is often lavished with gifts and the best homes and goods, similar to what a sister would receive from her brother (cf Inglis 1991:257; Huntsman 1995:92-100; Setu 1988:103; Tuimauluga 1977:53; Setu 1986:11; Garrett 1982:124; Tupuai 1972:7-19). The *faiife'au* and the covenant he shares is very special and it is highly honored in all aspects of the *fa'asāmoa*.

The role of the *matai* system had been modified to fit this new social order, but interestingly this new structure was still true to the *fa'asāmoa*. An integrated system of church and *fa'asāmoa* was now born. The role of the *fa'asāmoa* in the context of church is to protect the dignity and sanctity of all those associated with this form of worship.

The overall responsibility of the *fā'asāmoa* is to protect the men and women who serve within the task of preaching the Gospel. The social structure of the church community mirrors that of the village, except that within the church community the *faiife'au* is elevated to the highest rank as the representative of the new *Atua* or God. *Matai* have become deacons within the church and their status within the congregation is a reflection of their ranks in the village. Unlike other Polynesian cultures, the new religion was fortunately introduced in a manner that was well understood by Samoans. Kamu writes, “Culture is important. In order for the Gospel to be meaningfully conveyed and received, it must be communicated in forms understood by the people. Symbols, images and language being used must be borne out of their cultural soil of experience. In doing so, the Gospel becomes rooted in the local soil, and in many ways transforms the inner life of the people. This is what happened in Samoa” (Kamu 1996:179).

These doctrines and ideologies continue to inspire and engage the lives of many Samoans even up to the time of migration outside of the islands. The life of prayer and church has become so embedded to the point that becoming a part of a church community became very important. As a student at the University of Hawai'i, I am constantly reminded by my parents, chiefs, and various Samoan adults to continue to pray and go to church. This advice is often shared with any individual who departs the family. The life of a Samoan almost seems “empty” without some form of organized religion in their lives.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The late 18th century was the beginning of a great spiritual revival in England and there was a renewed priority to evangelize the world by being faithful to the command of Christ (Matthew 28:19), to go “into all the world to preach the Gospel to every living creature.” The missionary awakening of Protestantism initially took place in the preceding century with churches in other European countries, such as Germany. They led the way for the evangelization of non-European peoples (Goodall 1954:1). The sensitivity to the command of Christ through the ‘Great Commission’ would be a driving force in the creation of the Missionary Society. Many of the men and women who participated in the mission were out to witness and “save souls” and to “share with ‘the heathen’ the transformation wrought in their own lives by their conversions” (Garrett 1982:11). It is important to note that the British lower classes who worked as skilled labor would be the first to reach the islanders and prepare for religious conversion by “teaching them useful arts and trades” (Garrett 1982:11).

The formation of this organization was rooted in the Anglicans, however the ardent Congregationalists were later to become the chief supporters of the LMS. The early formation of the Congregationalist movement was pre-democratic; however during subsequent missions of evangelization, “its servants in the field were under the absolute and unquestionable authority of the Directors, to go and do exactly as they were told, not otherwise” (Garrett 1982:11-12). Interestingly, this top-down hierarchy is often used by the Samoan *fai’au* who implements actions that are usually unquestioned based on his authority and status within a *nu’u* or congregation.

Although a strong Congregationalist presence is represented, the London Missionary Society was focused more on missions than denominational church order. Goodall (1954:3) writes that at the inaugural meeting of the new society in 1795, one of the leaders declared, “The petty distinctions among us, of names and forms, the diversities of administrators and modes of Church Order, we agree, shall this day be merged in the greater, nobler, and characteristics name of Christians.” In addition, the Fundamental Principle of the Society was designed to “not send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government (about which there may be difference of opinion among serious persons), but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen” (Goodall 1954:3).

Although the LMS Samoan church is later called the Congregational Church of Sāmoa the early missionaries were drawn from both Congregational and Presbyterian churches. Goodall (1954:367) writes “although these polities [Congregational and Presbyterian] played a considerable part in the development of the Samoan Church, from its early days the distinction between the ‘gathered’ company of believers and the local parish or community was much less clearly defined than either Congregationalism or Presbyterianism normally required.” The structure that exists today is a mixture of both denominations weaved together with the *fa’asāmoa* (Tuimauluga 1977:53).

With the excitement and interest created by the publication of Cook’s and Bligh’s voyages, the islands of the Pacific became the LMS’s first field for spreading the command of Christ (Garrett 1982:9). In Sāmoa, the establishment of the new religion was easier than they had expected, no doubt because the incorporation of indigenous concepts of *‘āiga* (family), *matai* (chief), *fa’alupega* (genealogy), *alofa* (love), *tautua*

(service), *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *usita'i* (obedience), *feagaiga* (covenant) that were already embodied in the *fa'asāmoa* were congruent with the tenets of Christianity (Anae 1998:87-88). Watters (1959:397) writes “New taboos such as observance of the Sabbath and the new moral precepts of Christianity were readily accepted as they replaced old taboos of equal severity. In this way new religious elements fulfilled similar functions in the whole culture-complex to those which they gradually replaced.” Over time the *fa'asāmoa* and the church would become enmeshed in fulfilling the ‘Great Commission’.

By the turn of the century the ministry was becoming a strong institution of spiritual guidance throughout Sāmoa. All the islands of Sāmoa by this time had been exposed to the Gospel and the *fa'asāmoa* had become a framework for understanding the Bible; likewise, the Bible would play a role in reinterpreting what aspects of the *fa'asāmoa* were deemed as Christian. The laws and regulations within the village boundaries began to reflect Christian ideologies at all levels. For example, during the bestowal of a chiefly title, the *faiife'au* is called to conduct an initial prayer to prepare the new *matai* for their service to family and especially to God. All events in Sāmoa will have someone present, either a *faiife'au*, *matai*, or an elder to provide a prayer to begin any activity. Traditional speeches and religious sermons often find Samoan legends and proverbs enmeshed with biblical stories to make a particular point. Samoans developed a strong ministry that best suited their needs, one that was centered on the *fa'asāmoa*. This was a framework that the Samoans knew well and their past religious affiliations and beliefs would only strengthen the transition to the new order. The old attitudes towards their old gods were not rejected, but only superseded (Watters 1959:397).

The LMS mission of evangelizing and saving the “heathen” would later become the objective of the Samoan missionary. The ‘native agency’ would prove to be strong and effective in the Pacific region. Only nine years following the arrival of Christianity, the first Samoan missionaries were sent with John Williams to Erromanga in the New Hebrides. Samoans were volunteering their service to the work of God. They would later be sent to other islands in the Pacific (e.g. Loyalty, Tokelau, Gilbert, Ellice Islands or Tuvalu and Papua). Those who went before the Malua Training Institution in 1844 received no special training, but simply had the desire to serve in ministry (Crocobe et al 1982:2). Whether the dedication to missions was to accept everything of the white man and receive more “mana” or just simply to preach the Gospel, the presence of the Samoan missionaries was noted within the region.

In 1922, the London Missionary Society approved that the Samoan LMS Church was capable to be financially independent and they would be able to conduct their own affairs. This was a move that the people of Sāmoa had long desired. It’s important to note that the 1920s in Sāmoa was a time of a national independence movement centered in the *Mau*.¹⁶ Since 1900, Sāmoa had been under the political control of colonial powers – first Germany and later New Zealand.¹⁷ As early as the 1910’s Sāmoa had experienced resistance movements against colonial powers. The famous orator Namulau’ulu Lauki Mamoe is praised as one of the leaders of the movement *Mau a Pule* to reinstate Samoan

¹⁶ The *Mau* movement asserted the superiority of the Samoan system of government over the New Zealand control.

¹⁷ In 1899 the Tripartite Agreement was signed between the U.S., Germany, and Great Britain. Germany occupied the western islands of Sāmoa from 1900 to 1914. Following the First World War, New Zealand occupied Sāmoa under a mandate by the League of Nations from 1914 until gaining independence in 1962. In 1997, “Western” was dropped from Western Sāmoa, and today they are called the islands of Sāmoa. The eastern islands (American Sāmoa) have been occupied by the U.S. since 1900. Great Britain found interest in the Solomon Islands and Tonga.

independence and assert their own authority (Meleiseā 1987:119). This period also saw anti-colonial protest in other parts of the region – the Rabaul Strike of 1929, the Apolosi Nawai movement in Fiji and even the Oloa Kumpani during the period of German rule in Sāmoa years earlier (Meleiseā 1987:154). Garrett records that the local church’s ‘*au toe’aina*¹⁸ (council of elders) set the stage in Sāmoa for both educated and experienced LMS Samoan leaders to “promote the prolonged resistance struggle against new Zealand in the 1920s, the emergence of the independent Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, and the independent nation of Western Samoa” (cf Garrett 1992:200; Tuimauluga 1977:30; Goodall 1974:371). During the *Mau* movement, the life of the church was greatly affected. The relationship between the missionaries and Samoan leaders would be tested. Over time a new mood would emerge and there was resentment that full control of the work of the Mission was not in the hands of the Samoan people (Goodall 1974:371). By 1928, the first constitution of the independent church was approved with six subsequent revisions until the last revision in 1974 (Tuimauluga 1977:32). By 1961 the name of the church was officially changed to the Congregational Christian Church of Sāmoa (CCCS) or as it is known today as the *Ekalesia Fa’apotopotoga Kerisiano i Sāmoa* (EFKS). Each village retained its own locally trained *faiife’au* and the annual *Fono Tele* (General Assembly) meeting of all *faiife’au* and church members would take place at the local Malua Theological Seminary.¹⁹ Delegates from both the western and eastern islands would participate in these meetings. The entire work

¹⁸ The ‘*au toe’aina* (council of elders) was established by the LMS in 1907. It included ordained pastors and elder deacons from various districts. The role of council was to look after all affairs of the church, including approval of candidates for ordination and disciplining those within the ministry.

¹⁹ Malua Theological College was established in 1844. The objective was to train Samoan men and their wives for ministry as missionaries to other Pacific Islands and preparation for work within the villages. Malua continues to play a major role in preparing men and women for ministry work.

of the Congregational Church in Sāmoa and throughout the Pacific would require full volumes, but this is just a glimpse into the transition to autonomy by the Samoan ministry.

In the early 1980's, a schism occurred within the Samoan Congregational Church. The delegates from American Sāmoa found reasons to establish their own church assembly which later became known as the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa (CCCAS) or the *Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Sāmoa* (EFKAS). It was never the original intent of American Sāmoa to separate from the 'Mother Church.' Rather as early as 1964, delegates from American Sāmoa requested to have their own separate administration as a means of carrying out more effective work in the American Sāmoa islands of Tutuila and Manu'a. On February of 1980, the district of American Sāmoa passed a majority ruling to create a separate administration of its own. A delegation was sent to the Mother church at Malua to discuss the decision. Unfortunately, for the delegates from American Sāmoa, the council of elders did not meet and they were unable to discuss the issue. An emergency meeting was subsequently called by the council of elders in Apia and they sent a delegation to American Sāmoa "with the aim of reconciliation but instead declared the District as the prodigal son who wants to break away" (Tuimauluga 1977:77). The Congregational Church schism divided the church, both politically and spiritually. In July of 1980, the first General Meeting was held in American Sāmoa and the district declared themselves the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa (CCCAS). The land that was purchased for headquarters of the CCCAS was named Kanana Fou, the 'New Canaan'. The sanctuary would be called 'Ua Taunu'u, "We have arrived." In 1983, the Kanana

Fou Theological Seminary was established with the same objectives and teaching methods as their counterpart at Malua Theological Seminary in Sāmoa. All of the initial instructors who began Kanana Fou were Malua trained instructors and pastors.

During the time of the schism, many of the elders (*toea'ina*) from both assemblies traveled abroad to visit Samoans who lived in the diaspora, mainly in New Zealand, Hawai'i and the U.S. mainland to contact established congregations willing to align themselves with either assembly. Although not always the case, many of the established congregations whose members were from the western islands of Sāmoa would typically support the CCCS, whereas the *faiife'au* and congregations with a majority of American Samoans would follow and support the CCCAS.

This research does not look at other religious organizations that were also established in Sāmoa such as the Methodists, Catholics, Assembly of God, Mormons, and Seven-Day Adventists. The Congregational Christian Church as the first and largest church body in the islands of Sāmoa²⁰ has influenced other congregations; thus other churches have adopted the same structure to define and organize their own assemblies.

MIGRATION

Pacific Island migration is part of the legacy of the region and it has been taking place for hundreds of years. The forms of migration have obviously changed throughout

²⁰ Both the CCCS and CCCAS are affiliated with the Council of World Missions (CWM). According to the latest statistics from the CWM website (www.cwmmission.org), there are approximately 70,000 members and 329 congregations affiliated with CCCS. The CCCAS has approximately 39,000 members and 117 congregations in American Sāmoa, New Zealand, and U.S. In 1966, the London Missionary Society and the Commonwealth Missionary Society formed the Congregational Council of World Missions. That name would later change to the Council of World Missions. This organization is a partnership of 31 church bodies committed to missions throughout the world. The members of CWM have affiliations with church bodies in Africa, the Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and South Asia.

the years in terms of modes of transportation and reasons for movement. Hau'ofa (2008:27-39) has defined a new way of understanding the Pacific region and their travels throughout the region and abroad. He refutes all claims of the 'Western' perspective that emerged from colonial literature describing the Pacific region as a vastness of Pacific Ocean and as small, dotted islands isolated from the rest of the world. Rather he prefers that the region be understood as our 'sea of islands' in which the people were free to move in order to create social networks, trade, exchange goods, and engage in war with neighboring islands. This Pacific model of migration has connected the people of the region, and it reflects the mobility and transnationalism of the people and cultures of this region of the world. Hau'ofa identifies the people of the Pacific as natural seafarers. He writes "Islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor but because they are unnaturally confined and severed from many of their traditional sources of wealth and because it is in their blood to be mobile" (Hau'ofa 2008:35).

Migration continues to be important in all three island regions of the Pacific. Within Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, there are twenty-two political states and almost a thousand languages. This is an area with great geographical, cultural, and economic diversity (Spickard, Rondilla, and Wright 2002:70). This research will explore the international migration, assimilation, and adaption of just one group of Pacific Islanders, namely Samoans, in California. More importantly, this research will review how Samoans in California have negotiated cultural, linguistic, and national identities while being away from the 'homeland'. I will look at this process within the church setting.

The reasons for modern Samoan migration to cities in New Zealand, Hawai'i, and the U.S. mainland are similar to that of many of their counterparts from other Pacific Islands. In the context of Sāmoa, it is difficult to talk about migration without understanding the Samoan concept of *malaga*. Lilomaiva-Doktor (2009:1) defines *malaga* as the Samoan term for “migration,” “movement,” or, “travel back and forth.” The *malaga* will always situate the Samoan in the arena of the *‘āiga* or family. Historically, *malaga* described traveling parties in Sāmoa that travel from one village to another for family, social, or cultural reasons. In contemporary times the *malaga* continues to be important, as Samoans are traveling to areas outside of Sāmoa to communities in which their *‘āiga* have settled. That family support group has proven to be an effective way of assisting new immigrants in establishing themselves within the society that has become their new ‘home.’

Modern migrations for Samoans are more than just cultural, but are affected by “push” and “pull” factors. Generally “push” factors are associated with events that force migrants out of their home communities. The “pull” factors are connected to conditions of the host society that is attractive to the migrant community. With a focus on U.S. migration, Shu (1980:68-69) states,

Causes for Samoan migration to the United States vary according to individual circumstances. But it can be observed that Samoans come here for similar reasons that motivate other migrants: They come to seek a better way of life for themselves and their children. Some Samoans come here in search of better career opportunities; some come to join their spouses, parents, or other relatives who are already settled; occasionally, the younger ones come, or are sent by their parents, to pursue their educational goals; some adventurous ones may also come just to try out the American way of life, or simply to escape from the old customs in Samoa; and so forth.

It is difficult to give one absolute answer to the major influences of international migration for Pacific Islanders. Pitt and Macpherson (1974:9-20) have studied the migrant Samoan communities in New Zealand. For these migrants, the main reasons for travel are based on the economic motive of gaining income to support their immediate and extended families in Sāmoa, education of their children, and the maintenance of the *‘āiga*.

Migrations for economic reasons actually started initially with travels within Sāmoa. The first urban shift among Samoans began in the middle of the nineteenth century when the port town of Apia was formed. With a cash economy in motion, many Samoans in the villages began to look for opportunity to move closer to ‘town’ in order to find better means of supporting families and receiving education and medical care. In 1942 the American marines landed in Sāmoa and this was an opportunity for many Samoans to find cash employment. Apia was a springboard for other opportunities overseas. In addition to being ‘town’, it was where individuals were able to save and purchase fares to go abroad. More Samoans from Apia would go to New Zealand for economic reasons or Fiji for education opportunities at the Medical College, the South Pacific Commission Training Centre, the Derrick Technical Institute, and for United Nations training courses (Pitt and Macpherson 1974:7-11). In order to get to Hawai‘i or the west coast of the U.S., many had to travel through Pago Pago. The post Second World War saw an industrial expansion in New Zealand which led to the mass migration from Sāmoa (Faaleava 2003:282). Many relatives would travel abroad once people have become established with both work and living arrangements.

The Samoans who settle in the U.S. mainland and Hawai'i come from both Sāmoa and American Sāmoa. It is important to note that American Samoan citizens are American nationals and therefore are able to travel freely to and from the U.S. In contrast, citizens of independent Sāmoa enter the U.S. through immigration restrictions (Shu and Satele 1977:9). The earliest records of Samoan migration to the U.S. out of American Sāmoa took place as early as 1925 with approximately 33 Samoans (six Samoan families) settling in Laie, Hawai'i as part of the Mormon Church. With the completion of the Mormon Temple in Laie, many more Samoans of the Mormon faith began to migrate to Hawai'i (Pierce 1956:20). The largest wave of migration was during the 1950's with the close of the U.S. Naval base in Pago Pago. The Samoan *fitafita* (enlisted men) were disbanded and reenlisted into the regular Navy. Kotcheck (1975:82) writes, "In 1952, the U.S.S. President Jackson carried 921 or 958 (the reports vary on the number) Samoans to Honolulu to join the uncounted numbers who had preceded this single move." This was called the "great migration" of Samoans and the first large Samoan *malaga* of its kind.

With the upgrades to the airports in American Sāmoa and Western Sāmoa, the 1970s was a time of heavy migration from Sāmoa. Migrants could now travel from Sāmoa to Hawai'i and the U.S. in a matter of hours. In the U.S. mainland, many Samoan communities developed in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Oceanside. In addition to the west coast, many Samoans of the Mormon faith were attracted to communities such as Salt Lake City, Utah and Independence, Missouri. Although families did choose to leave Sāmoa, they continued to keep their ties to the home islands in various ways. The practice of the *fa'asāmoa* through funerals, weddings, and

traditional customs of exchange of fine mats and money continued to be priority among many Samoans. Cultural *malaga* now took place between communities inside and outside of Sāmoa. In maintaining this community and cultural ties, the establishment of churches became a priority. Ta'asē believes that these congregations have “become important cultural and social centers, providing a continuation of communal fellowship, and social ties through the use of language, art forms such as songs, speeches, dancing, and ceremonies” (cited in Pouesi 1994:11). The absence of the Samoan village in communities abroad allows for the churches to play a major role in maintaining the Samoan identity for people who live in the diaspora. Life styles abroad often make it difficult to duplicate the traditional *fa'asāmoa*, but there is an effort to practice the culture and language as authentically as possible (cf Shu & Satele 1977:14; Pitt and Macpherson 1974:65-66). The Samoan church abroad is often the only venue for many of these cultural and social activities.

“URBAN VILLAGES”²¹

When researching the Samoan community in the diaspora, it is frequently the case that scholars will mention the Samoan church as the main component. Samoan people themselves often ask each other “which church do you attend?” as a way of identifying with different Samoan communities within the area. The names of the pastor and his wife often indicate the geographic location of a church and the part of the Samoan community they serve. Since the establishment of my church in the 1970s, people

²¹ The etymology of the term “urban village” is unknown. In the context of the Samoan church community in the diaspora the term can be defined as “the blending of religious and secular dimensions of leadership in the migrant community [that] represents a creative development of an effective system of urban leadership that takes advantage of the position of the church as urban village” (Janes 1990:94).

continue to name it “Apela’s Church” after the late Rev. Dr. Apela Moananu. Apela passed away in 1995 but people continue to say “Oh you attend Apela’s church” even though we have our third *faiife’au* since Apela. This has become a substitute to village names that many Samoans often identify with.

The beginning of the diasporic Samoan church congregations started as early as the 1950’s in Hawai’i and the U.S. mainland by Samoan *fitafita*. Faaleava (2003:289) writes, “*fitafitas* founded most of the Samoan churches in the US. Fourteen *fitafitas* became ‘*faiifeaus*’ or reverends.” For many Samoans, Christianity is fundamental for their existence and to not belong to a church community would mean a spiritual disconnect. In addition, social position and rank were realized through church membership. Tofaeono (in Macpherson et al 1978:40) stated in an interview “If you had a *matai* title and were not a deacon, you were nobody in the church community. So, to have a position of prestige, you had to be either a deacon, or a deacon with a *matai* title.”

Elders of the family will always emphasize God, church, and prayer. These have become the foundation of many of the first migrants, and for those who continue on the *malaga*. The first Samoan congregation in California started in the 1950s by a *fitafita* in San Diego, California. Many would drive down to San Diego to participate in services and connect with other Samoans. The situation in the Bay Area was the same. The year 1957 was the beginning of the first Samoan congregation in San Francisco (Janes 1984:198). With the increase of Samoans moving to the U.S. mainland, more and more congregations were established. Once congregations were established they would either request a *faiife’au* from Sāmoa to take over the congregation or utilize a lay-preacher (*A’oa’o*) to act as their *faiife’au*.

The Congregational Churches are rarely established independently; most are associated with the ‘Mother Church’ in Sāmoa (Malua) or American Sāmoa (Kanana Fou). My congregation is one of twelve churches within the *matāgaluega* (district) of the Southern California Conference of the CCCAS (Kanana Fou). Within the district, the twelve churches are divided into three *pulega*’s (sub-districts), each with its own pastor elder (*toea’ina*) to lead the *pulega*. This district is one of many spanning American Sāmoa, New Zealand, Australia, Hawai’i, and the U.S. mainland.²²

Family associations are important within the Samoan Congregation construct. I will use my own family as an example to explain the typical function and formation of many Samoan churches in America. In the 1950s, one of the first Samoan Churches was established by Rev. Elder Tuiofu Foisia in Carson, California. During the 1970’s, a great schism occurred within the congregation, and the members, including my family, decided to leave and form their own church body. The Samoan Congregational Church of Carson (SCC Church) was formed as a result. My grandfather was one of the founding members of this church body, he was also a *matai*. His title of Alofaituli was a recognized title in the honorifics or *fa’alupega* of the village of Vatia in American Sāmoa. As a *matai* and *sa’o* (senior title holder) of the extended family, my grandfather had authority over his *‘āiga* and within the village in Sāmoa. With the establishment of the church in Carson, he was able to use his status as *matai* to assist in bringing in new members. Within five years of being established, my grandfather used his position as *matai* to influence his extended family from the surrounding areas to come and join the SCC Church and

²² The U.S. Census Bureau from 2000 puts the population of American Sāmoa at approximately 57,291. According to the records of the Council of World Missions, the CCCAS has a membership of approximately 29,000 in American Sāmoa and 10,000 on the U.S. mainland, and in Hawai’i, New Zealand, and Australia.

support this new congregation. Families that would come from Sāmoa would also visit and attend the church. There were other families in the congregation with *matai* titles that had similar influence with their extended families. Within ten years, the SCC Church grew to become a recognized and respected congregation within the area of Southern California. Samoans in the diaspora are typically attracted to congregations where family and village connections are present. Pitt and Macpherson have shown that church membership in Sāmoa is often compulsory, whereas in the diaspora it is more voluntary (Pitt and Macpherson 1974:51). Although there is a freedom to choose congregations in the diaspora, many Samoans are more likely to be attracted to churches where people they are familiar with attend, either village members, family members, or friends of the *‘āiga*. This social factor in church membership is very important for Samoans.

According to Shu, the function of the Samoan churches are spiritual, social, and cultural (Shu 1980:230). The core of any Samoan church is spiritual guidance. The Samoan churches serve the goal of being a community that focuses on the teaching of the Bible and the practice of Christian principles. The services are typically conducted in the Samoan language, but it is sometimes bi-lingual depending on the *faiife’au* and the congregation. The church is also a place to receive social services. During funerals, weddings, and other Samoan events, the churches usually provide monies and fine mats to assist families with the cultural events that take place. Other churches serve to assist the community at large by feeding the poor and participating in projects of that nature. Social activities include a large range of activities from spiritual Bible Study to sports and bingo activities.

The concept of status plays a large part within the churches. The *matai* system is practiced in the diaspora and the church provides an avenue for both men and women to continue to identify themselves as Samoans with various positions in the church. Position and status are important in Samoan congregations, and the church hierarchy reflects the *matai* system in its emphasis on power and prestige. Although many deacons do not have a *matai* title, they are able to gain rank and recognition in the community through various church positions. The diasporic church system mirrors that of the traditional system.

The late Samoan clergyman Dr. Bert Tofaeono calls these churches “urban-villages” (Janes 1990:132). The Samoan village is mirrored as much as possible within the urban setting. This compromise has forged an environment to display both Christian teachings and the *fa’asāmoa* within a new context. Often within the community, a Samoan speaker would refer to the church as our *nu’u* or village. It is much easier to use *le tatou lotu* which literally means “our congregation” but often people within the churches refer to themselves as *le tatou nu’u* or “our village” in order to connect to their ethnic roots as Samoans. Over periods of time, these “urban villages” often begin to fundraise in order to purchase land and build sanctuaries.

This fundraising can vary from luaus, bingo games, raffles, plate sales, and many other creative means in order to build a sanctuary for worship or to just support the congregation. It is also important to remember that in addition to responsibilities in the “States”, many families are still required to send remittances back to their families in Sāmoa to deal with various *fa’alavelave*. Growing up, I often participated in luaus. It was a way to expose myself to the art of Samoan and Polynesian dance and still do

something great for my church. We continue to fundraise. My congregation had our first *fa'aulufalega* or Hall Dedication in 1987 with hundreds of people present. In 2011, we will be dedicating our new sanctuary and remodeled hall. The cultural protocols of the 'ava ceremony, fine mat presentations, and traditional Sāmoa *siva* (dance) will all take place. For anyone to suggest a non-traditional option of dedicating the hall and new sanctuary would be viewed by elders as ludicrous and unworthy of a “proper” Samoan dedication.

Samoan youth born and raised in the diaspora who are exposed to this environment are afforded a glimpse of the life of a Samoan as lived in the islands. The language and practice of different aspects of the culture are well represented at these activities and the youth have the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into their culture. The Samoan language is of fundamental importance to the congregation. The Samoan language is spoken during the services and at most functions of the church. It is rare to hear elders speak in English.

I myself observed from a very young age the importance of the *fa'asāmoa* within the church setting. The Samoan language was used at all functions. Our *faiife'au* spoke Samoan and encouraged that from us as well. I learned proper Samoan etiquette within this community and the essence of the “do’s and don’ts of a Samoan lifestyle.” The community continues to engage me in the language and culture of Sāmoa. I have witnessed how this church community can be utilized for the purpose of educating both spiritual and cultural awareness. This is an environment conducive to learning different aspects of the *fa'asāmoa*, especially the language. The “urban villages” can serve a higher purpose than just spiritual awareness. The churches can provide an opportunity

for a collaborative effort of *matai*, *faiʻeʻau*, youth and the community to make a difference in maintaining the *faʻasāmoa* culture and the language within a context outside of Sāmoa (cf Macpherson & Pitt 1974:67; Janes 1984:198; Faaleava 2003:289; Rolff 1978:109; Shu 1980:218; Macpherson, Shore, & Franco 1978).

CHAPTER THREE

DATA AND ANALYSIS

THE INTERVIEWS AND TALANOAGA

In this chapter, I will present the data I have collected and an analysis of that data. It is my hope that the Samoan community and any community interested in this research will use this information for language maintenance and cultural development programs, more so in the diaspora. The data obtained through the *talanoaga*, interviews and the youth/adult focus group is centered on the theme of identity as a Samoan and the use of language within these diasporic communities. Overall, I have found that those who have a good grasp of the language have tried to encourage the use of the Samoan language through church-related activities, language courses, and through various cultural functions in the community. These interviews raised the following questions: Is there a secured Samoan identity? Is an individual considered a Samoan regardless of whether he/she speaks the language well? Who is responsible for teaching the Samoan language? What type of language curriculum will effectively impact language maintenance in the diaspora? Should the church be held accountable for language and cultural maintenance as “urban villages” in the diaspora?

A total of seven interviews and *talanoaga* sessions and one focus group comprised of eleven youth and adults took place over a span of two months. Three of the seven interviews/*talanoaga* sessions were conducted with Samoan *faiife’au*. One was a reverend elder (*toea’ina*) for a Southern California district of the CCCAS; one is currently the *Fa’atonu* or Director of Christian Education for the same district of the

CCCAS, and the third *faiife'au* is currently pastor of the Assembly of God Church in Carson, California. This approach allowed for perspectives from different *faiife'au* on the issue of language development. The focus of this research is based on the congregational churches in Southern California, specifically in the City of Carson and its surrounding area.

In addition to the *faiife'au*, two interviews were conducted with current Sunday school leaders from the local congregational churches of the same district. Both teachers are involved within their congregations and serve the Samoan community at various levels; both currently serve with their families at the CCCAS. One is a Samoan publisher and he has written numerous children's books in both Samoan and English. The sixth interviewee is a High Chief from the island of Savai'i and she has served the Carson Samoan Community in California for many years. In the summer of 2010, she was awarded a Samoan Achievers International Award (SAI Awards) for her efforts at educating and championing a Samoan Language Preservation program in the community. The final interviewee is a Samoan community activist who was raised outside of the Samoan community but has made a great effort to enroll in Samoan language courses to learn to speak the language in the community. In summary, all seven interviewees have different backgrounds that contribute various perspectives on language development and its significance within the church and the community.

According to the *fa'avae* (constitution) of the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa (CCCAS), "youth" is defined as individuals between the ages of 18 to 30. The eleven youth and adults who participated in the focus group vary from ages 23 to 38, and they all attend the CCCAS. Five of the eleven serve in some form of leadership

capacity with youth from their respective churches. I had initially planned to have a larger group of youth and adults from various denominations to discuss language, but only participants from the CCCAS were present.

I was able to divide the participants of the formal interviews, *talanoa* sessions, and focus group into five different categories: Samoan youth and adults born in America, Samoan youth and adults born in either American or Independent Sāmoa, *faiife'au* and religious instructors within the church, a Samoan language educator, and someone not affiliated with the Samoan church but interested in language courses. The format of analysis was adopted from Melanie Anae's doctoral thesis on Samoan identity in New Zealand. Anae used quotes from her interviews to begin each section of her chapter on analysis to present the various themes of her project. I will use that same method in this project. With the exception of High Chief Muliagatele Mona Poretasano, names and church place names have been changed in order to ensure anonymity. Muliagatele has championed programs for the community for many years and her advice is invaluable. I have worked with Muliagatele in numerous projects and she has expressed her support for this thesis and the potential it has for impacting the church community. It is my hope that anyone interested with developing language programs in Los Angeles would contact Muliagatele and explore methods of teaching Samoan. As a result of the interviews and focus group discussion, six main themes were extracted. Each section will begin with a particular quote that summarizes the theme and is followed by a discussion of the data.

THE PARTICIPANTS

(i) Youth & adults born in America:

NAOMI: a Samoan girl born in America, is age 26 who currently attends a CCCAS church in Southern California. She works as an academic advisor for a local school.

SAM: a Samoan male age 27 who is currently a nurse and is involved as a youth leader for his church in the CCCAS. His family is not fluent in Samoan, but he is self-taught in the Samoan language and culture.

TIA: a Samoan female age 26, who attends CCCAS church in Carson and is a youth leader. Her parents left the CCCAS, but she refuses to leave and attend any other church.

CHRISTINA: a Samoan female age 26 who attends a local CCCAS church. She is an active member of her church in Carson but has been often criticized for not speaking Samoan.

HOPE: a mother of two from a local CCCAS church in Carson, age 23. Her husband is from Sāmoa and they are active in youth activities.

MELE: a Samoan female age 26 who attends a local CCCAS church and is currently Secretary of her youth group.

LUA: a Samoan male, age 38, who is very active in church and community affairs.

LIE: age 37, a Samoan female who is active in all CCCAS affairs and speaks Samoan, but is interested in learning more of the language. She is a Sunday school teacher and a former youth officer.

(ii) Youth and adults born in Sāmoa:

SILA: a 30 year old female born in Sāmoa. She is an advocate of the Samoan language and is a youth officer and Sunday school teacher at her CCCAS church.

TAPU: a Samoan male, age 30, who was born and raised in Sāmoa. He is married with two children. He currently serves at a local CCCAS church in Carson.

ANTHONY: at the age of 23, he is currently President and leader of one of the largest youth groups of the CCCAS. He was born and raised in Sāmoa and recently moved to the U.S.

(iii) Faife'au and Church Leaders

TAMĀ: a pastor elder (*faife'au toe'aina*) of the CCCAS. He was educated at Kanana Fou Theological Seminary and holds a Doctorate of Ministry degree. Tamā has served as elder for over 10 years.

SANI: currently serves as *faife'au* for an Assembly of God church in Carson.

TAGA: Director of Christian Education or *Fa'atonu* for the CCCAS district of Southern California. There are currently over 800 Samoan youth under his leadership.

PETER: is a community activist, publisher, and was a Sunday school teacher for the CCCAS. He has served the Samoan community for over 20 years.

PUSA: an advocate for language as a Sunday school teacher. She is involved with the CCCAS.

(iv) Samoan Language Educator:

MULIAGATELE: a Samoan language educator who has served within the Carson community for over 20 years. She holds a *matai* title from Sāmoa.

(v) Not associated with the CCCAS, but interested in language programs:

SAMI: a community activist who was raised outside of the Samoan community as a child. She has been instrumental in promoting Samoan events throughout the State of California. She is also affiliated with the National Office of Samoan Affairs.

“WE LOSE OUR LANGUAGE WE LOSE OUR IDENTITY”

This is a quote from an interview with a *faife'au toe'aina* (elder) named Tamā who directs one of the three *pulega* (sub-district) of the CCCAS in Southern California. Often when Tamā speaks to the Samoan youth of the sub-district and district, he

emphasizes both *aganu'u* (culture) and *gagana* (language) as major attributes of being Samoan. In 2008, youth of the district had an open forum where the *faiife'au toe'aina* was present. The forum was organized and led by youth officers who were elected by their own peers of the *pulega*. The forum was one program initiated to engage in dialogue regarding culture and language within the Samoan churches in America. Those in attendance included both adults and youths, but the presence of the older participants did not stop the youths from commenting on the topic. The first question asked was, “Should Samoan church services and *faiife'au* use English to preach the Gospel?” The feelings and reactions varied, and there was tension among the youth and parents. The youth stated that they did not “feel” the Spirit of God because they were so disconnected from the church because their knowledge of the Samoan language was limited.

The *faiife'au* present made comments that the English language is important because it gives the youth understanding of the Biblical concepts, but as messengers trained in Sāmoa, they felt that the Samoan language should be used for the benefit of the elders and adults as well. In many cases, the elders and adults have a limited understanding of English. In a recent interview with the *faiife'au toe'aina*, he expressed that losing your language is just like losing your identity. Tamā recognizes that the youth are in need of spiritual direction, and attempts to use English sporadically in sermons; however, the overall church service is conducted in Samoan.

What is Samoan cultural identity?

The English words “culture”, “tradition” and “identity” are often used interchangeably among Samoans. This theme of cultural identity was not clearly defined by Tamā’s quote, but he was specifically referring to language use and the practice of the

fa'asāmoa as the way to being identified as culturally Samoan. The term “cultural identity” can also be confused with ethnic identity. Anae’s dialogue on identity within the New Zealand context differentiates between the two terms. With ethnic identity, there are common traits that can connect people together such as race, history, traditions, language, and religion. These main features show a cultural instinct and common descent (Anae 1998:53-54). This ethnic affiliation reflects blood ties and an attitude of “us versus them” (Linnekin & Poyer 1990:2). Cultural identity is associated with ethnicity, but there is more of an emphasis on the internal structure of shared knowledge, practices, and experiences.

In the *fa'asāmoa*, the practice of the language is a large part of cultural identification according to Tamā. That identity is put into question if a child is unable to respond in a linguistically appropriate manner that reflects competency in a wide range of language registers such as the *gagana fa'aaloalo* or the language of respect (Lesā 2009:vi). As a Samoan language educator, Simanu writes “‘*auā 'o tātou fa'ailoga va'aia (identity) ia e fa'amāonia ai lo tātou tūlaga i le ōlaga i totonu o lo tātou atunu'u fa'apea ma atunu'u i fafo*”, “the language is our identity that truly recognizes us in our homeland and abroad” (Simanu 2002:41). Both Lesā and Simanu support the idea that Samoan competency identifies an individual as being culturally Samoan. Their view is shared by Samoan educator Galumalemana A. Hunkin who believes that the relationship between language and culture is like people and oxygen. We cannot survive without it. He writes, “The relationship between language and culture is like oxygen is to human survival. Without one, the other will not survive” (Macpherson, Spoonley, Anae 2001:197).

Samoan language use is emphasized not only because one is a Samoan, but a common language allows people to identify more closely with each other ethnically (Gudykunst 1988:1). Tamā wants the youth of his congregation and within the sub-district to learn to communicate in Samoan because it will allow them to identify with the community and they will become a future generation able to continue the work of the ministry. During the interview Tamā made a comparison of today's ministry with the 1960s and 1970s initial stage of Samoan churches in California. According to him, there was more of a community identity and sense of being *fa'asāmoa* as 'fresh' migrants to America. Those ideals valued by the early immigrants are dissolving and he associates this with the lack of language use. According to Tamā, by losing language, one can lose the essence of being a Samoan. Like Tamā, Hunkin believes "To be truly successful as New Zealand-Samoans and New Zealand-Cook Islanders means that one should not only achieve in the education system and the world, but should also be educated in, and connected to, one's Pacific roots via language and cultural studies" (Macpherson, Spoonley, & Anae 2001:201).

Another interviewee Peter, who is a Sunday school teacher and a Samoan community leader disagrees with Tamā. He believes that language is only a resource that can be used to communicate with God and nothing more. He makes the analogy with Samoan celebrities like the 'Rock' Dwayne Johnson and football great Troy Polamalu, both of whom are Samoan. He says, "I don't think any of these guys speak the language and we can't say that they are not Samoan." The language is very important to Peter, but it does not take precedence over spiritual edification. To Peter, a Samoan is a Samoan

regardless of whether he or she speaks the language or not. One's knowledge of a particular language does not make that individual identify more as a Samoan.

This view is contrasted with Christina age 26, who commented at the focus group that during her recent stay in Sāmoa she often was referred to as “Sāmoa toy”. That is a term often used among Samoan youth to describe someone who doesn't really act Samoan and so is described as a ‘toy’ Samoan. Christina felt out of place and shunned by her own family and village. Anae (Macpherson, Spoonley, & Anae 2001:110) points out that the “Samoan language competence is, for island born Samoans, the primary identifier of who is and is not Samoan.” Christina was born and raised in the mainland and she lacked the ability to speak Samoan. This is the type of attitude Peter finds offensive and unnecessary within the Samoan community. Another California girl named Tia, age 26, is very adamant that “You can't tell me that I'm not Samoan”, but she admits that she is also guilty of recognizing others as not being culturally Samoan because of their residence or the way individuals present themselves. She made the comment that the Samoan girls from the “OC” or Orange County are less Samoan than those from Carson or areas that have high populations of Samoans. Her reasoning is that they are not as familiar with “our type of churches” and the Samoan *feau* (chores) that young girls and boys practice. Some felt that Tia is guilty herself of stigmatizing and defining Samoan cultural identity.

The final words of Tamā focused on the language as an *inati mai le Atua* or a gift from God. It is a gift that needs to be developed and used by the people. Unfortunately, in this case, the gift is not being passed down to the next generation. The quote was “lose our language we lose our identity”. The inability to speak Samoan has become the prime

source of Samoan identity confusion in the diaspora (Macpherson, Spoonley, Anae 2001:110). Language competency then, is a very significant determiner of cultural identity with Samoans. Samoans will differ in what constitutes a ‘real’ Samoan. This section defined cultural Samoan identity from different points of view based on interviews from both those born in Sāmoa and those born outside of the islands.

2

“WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME, IT’S WISE TO SAY THAT I’M AN AMERICAN SAMOAN”

Naomi, age 26, is an academic advisor at a local school and she was raised in the congregational church her entire life. She recently married and refuses to attend any other church, even though she does not speak the language. During the focus group Naomi stated that to people of other cultures she does not mind saying that she is Samoan when asked “what are you?”; however to other Samoans she prefers to say that “I am an American Samoan.” Not American Samoan in the sense that she is from American Sāmoa, but that she is a Samoan born and raised in America. Naomi says that other cultural groups do not know the difference, but she wants to be identified as such to other Samoans so that questions are directed to her in English and not in Samoan. Naomi is typical of hundreds of Samoan youth who want to know the language, but avoid awkwardness or embarrassment; they would prefer that people view them as from the Samoan American group. These are youth ‘born in the diaspora.’ Naomi’s identity is

based on her affinity with the diasporic Samoan community in America, and her comments beg a closer examination of the Samoan diaspora.

What is the diaspora?

In most academic circles, the term “diaspora” is defined as migrant groups who have settled outside of their homeland.²³ I was introduced to this term at a conference during my first year at the University of Hawai‘i. I had never heard of the term before, but I realized that “diaspora” is often used to define people like myself who were born outside of Sāmoa. Cohen (1997) has written extensively on this topic and according to him the word “diaspora” is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the *dia* (over). The ancient Greeks used the word in association with migration and colonization. The term is closely associated with the biblical context of forced dispersion of the Jewish people to Babylon as found in Deuteronomy 28:58-68.²⁴

With the settlement of Babylon, many of the Jewish people wanted to stay true to their culture and lifestyle. Cohen (1997:4) writes “their [Jewish people] enforced residence in Babylon provided an opportunity to construct and define their historical experience, to invent their tradition.” The exile to Babylon has forced the diasporic or ‘wandering Jews’ to develop creative ways of living outside of their homeland. The use of the term is now associated more with movements of any people or groups to new

²³ April Henderson (1999:ix) defines diaspora as “A population spread across geographically disparate locations, typically across the borders of nation-states, sharing a common language, common cultural ideals, and believing themselves to be descended from a common ancestral homeland with which they typically maintain contact.”

²⁴ Deuteronomy 28:58-68 : “If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. . . . Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth; . . . Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; . . .” (NAS Version).

settlements (cf Liliomaiva-Docktor 2009:5; Helen Lee 2009:13; Gershon 2007:485; Spickard et al 2002:1-27). Specifically the Samoan diaspora has maintained family ties to the islands and members continue to practice the *fa'asāmoa* in its new contexts. As a result, the Samoan frame of identity has been based on context where one lives rather than heredity (Gershon 2007:474-486). There has been a creation of knowledge that is anchored to the natal homeland of Sāmoa, but it has traveled with those who have left the islands and have thus transitioned into its own form in the diaspora.

I chose to use the term 'diaspora' because it strongly describes migrant communities who continue to "retain a collective identification with an ancestral homeland" (Chappell 1999:278). The reasons for identifying with the ancestral homeland will vary due to the different circumstances (e.g. language, culture, politics, religion, etc); rather than define one community as transient and the other as rooted, there is a strong influence of one upon the other (Chappell 1999:277). In this case, there is a strong cultural influence of the homeland to diasporic communities.

For youth born in the diaspora, language issues have resulted in tensions between those who are 'native' speakers and those who do not speak at all. In the context of the family, church, and community many Samoan youth are engaged with the language primarily through listening. To most migrant Samoans, being limited to listening skills is often not "taken as signs of Samoan identity" (Gershon 2007:487). That has caused many youth to either try to prove themselves through 'performative culture' as discussed in Chapter One or make a comment that explains their position as one born in America or the diaspora.

Within the diaspora, there has been a change in social roles. Within the host society such as the U.S., the traditional bases of authority are no longer paramount. The youth are able to gain social and economic status as a result of their personal achievements in education and work (Macpherson, Spoonley, Anae 2001:73). Although still important, the family and village connections and chiefly titles are not as influential within the diaspora, and the young Samoans view the opportunities for success as individualistic. Naomi is interested in identifying with America because she has participated more in the American lifestyle. With the exception of the church, Naomi's entire educational career is focused around American ideals and attitudes which define her attitude toward aspects of Samoan language and culture that she may not fully comprehend.

New Zealand Diaspora

Statistically by the late 1960s, an estimated 25 percent of all persons born in Western Samoa were living overseas (Pitt & Macpherson 1974:7). Chapter Two of this thesis provides an in depth analysis of the New Zealand diaspora and the reasons for the migration abroad. In New Zealand Anae has also come across the "new identity" of the local Samoans. This concept of "New Zealand-born" Samoan has provided a new focus of identity for first, second, and third generations of Samoans in New Zealand (Spickard et al. 2002:160). This term has become a way for many youth and adults to identify themselves to Samoan-born, non-Samoans, and other Pacific Islanders. Like Naomi's comment of identifying as an American Samoan, the same idea is practiced in New Zealand among the community. The term "*fiapalagi*" or a person who acts white, is often used to define individuals who do not want to associate or are not knowledgeable of

the culture and language of Sāmoa. Although unfortunate, there is still the desire for Samoans, regardless of birthplace or limited knowledge of culture, to want to identify with their Samoanness. Being a “NZ-born Samoan” provides an alternative to being viewed as “*fiapalagi*”.

For youth born in the diaspora, there are challenges mainly with Pacific Islander identity. The attitude of most Samoan parents is for their children to advance academically and receive a ‘good’ education in the *pālāgi* world. However they also have a strong desire for young people to maintain their identity as Samoans. It is in the process of ‘getting ahead’ in the *pālāgi* world that the lifestyle of the *pālāgi* begins to take precedence. For the most part there are three environments that Samoan youth are a part of in the NZ diaspora. The first environment ‘produces young people whose primary orientation is to Samoan values and institutions’ (Spoonley et al. 1984:114). In environment two, “Samoan culture exists alongside a non-Samoan culture and children move between the two . . .” (Macpherson 1984:117). In environment three, life of a Samoan child is “oriented and dominated by non-Samoan language, values, activities and personnel, and children brought up in them typically reflect this” (Macpherson 1984:120). In the third environment, English is often used by parents to communicate with their children and therefore there are no language models for youth to follow or copy.

City of Carson Diaspora

The City of Carson is home to one of the largest Samoan populations in the U.S. ‘mainland.’ Many Samoans are familiar with the City of Carson, and it is often referred to as “Pago Pago No. 2” because of its high settlement of Samoans. Carson is neighbor

to other concentrated settlements of Samoans in Compton, Wilmington, and Long Beach (Shu & Satele 1977:7). According to the U.S. Census of 2000, approximately 2,195 Samoans live in Carson; Samoans in Carson comprise 2.4% of the total population. Samoan cultural activities take place in and around Carson, such as the Flag Day, *Ho'olaule'a*, Harbor Lake Cultural Festival, and numerous church luaus. The first Samoan congregational church in Carson, *Lokou ole Ola*, was established in the mid-1950s by the late Rev. Tuiofu Foisia Sr. *Lokou ole Ola* would later give rise to “offshoots” of different congregations throughout the City of Carson. Currently there are five Samoan congregational churches in Carson, three are affiliated with the ‘Mother Church’ in American Sāmoa (CCCAS).

There are a lot of similarities between the New Zealand and the U.S. mainland Samoan communities. Samoan chiefs and ministers play a major role in both communities. The close kinship bonds of the extended family and the church play significant roles in the social life of the Samoan community as well (cf Shu & Satele 1977:18; Pouesi 1994:13; Faaleava 2003:288-290; Sala 1988:60). Within these church communities in the U.S., the situation of language and identity continues to be an issue among Samoan youth. Many of the youth continue to engage themselves in the Samoan church environment in order to maintain that Pacific Islander identity and not be confused with Hispanic or African American youth. Naomi is only one of many examples of a response to the issue of Samoan identity. Many Samoan youth want to identify with Sāmoa more than America. Christina, age 26, says that she wears her colorful Samoan *lavalava* wherever she goes in Carson so people will identify her as Samoan. She says: “Everywhere I go now I just *sulu* my ‘ie [wear my *lavalava*]. And

some say ‘uhh don’t go in the store with your *‘ie*’, I’m saying ‘but we’re Samoan this is where we come from’.”

The youth that I am in contact with in our church have the same idea of Samoanness. Hundreds have never been to Sāmoa, but they identify as both an American and as a Samoan. They often hear Samoan spoken in their homes but feel most competent themselves speaking English. When parents converse with their children in Samoan, English is spoken by the children. A little boy who attends my church’s Sunday school in Carson, would always say “please say it in English, I don’t understand.” The teachers are trying to use basic Samoan words, but the children will only respond in the language they feel most comfortable speaking, English. The children at my congregation often say “I’m an American, but I love my fa’asāmoa!” The sense of community and feelings of loyalty to both cultures is a common response by youth born abroad.

3

“WE SHOULD BEGIN WITH A-E-I . . .”

The initial intent of the London Missionary Society was to establish central mission stations throughout Sāmoa as teaching sites. It was not long after that the LMS realized that Samoans were not willing to leave their villages to attend the mission stations established throughout the islands. This resulted in the establishment of the *Ā’oga a le Faife’au* (Pastor’s School) within certain villages. At these pastoral schools, both the teachers and the LMS missionary supervisors were sensitive to both *matai* and

village affairs, it was at this point that the church structure took on a “distinctively Samoan character” (Davidson 1967:36). Within six years of the original missionary-run schools, almost two-hundred of these programs were established throughout the islands. The educational curriculum was not challenging, but it was a start. With the establishment of Malua Theological College in 1844, the untrained native village teachers were now replaced by Malua trained pastor-teachers. The subjects taught were “reading and writing in Samoan, basic arithmetic, religious instruction, and hymn singing” (Campbell & Sherington 2007:269-270). One of the methods used by the pastor-teachers to teach the pronunciation of the words was the *faitau pī* or the alphabet reader (APPENDIX C). The teacher would say the letter and the sound and the child would repeat the word and the sounds. This was the first method used by my Sunday school teachers to teach me how to read in Samoan. Samoan parents refer to the alphabets as either the *faitau pī* or the A-E-I. The letters of the Samoan alphabet are: A – E – I – O – U – F – G – L – M – N – P – S – T – V – H – K – R.

Pusa is currently a parent and Sunday school instructor at one of the local congregational churches. When I asked her about the teaching of the Samoan language at her congregation, she responded, “We should begin with the A-E-I! This is where the kids should begin.” Pusa is focused on practicing the basics of the Samoan language and culture of the *fa’asāmoa*. In her Sunday school, she is disappointed that many of the kids are being promoted to another class based on age and grade level without knowing the basics of the Samoan language and the Bible. Her challenge is not only with the existing Sunday school curriculum at her church but with the Church in general. At one point in

the interview Pusa said, “the responsibility of the church: *gagana* [language], *aganu’u* [culture] ma le *fa’aaloalo* [respect]!”

What is the responsibility of the church to language maintenance? Lesā is a strong advocate of the practice of the Samoan Language of Respect and the development of this language is directed to the church. The Samoan church plays a major role in not only teaching proper Samoan etiquette and protocol, but it facilitates and fosters cultural interactions through groups such as *’aufaipese* (choir), *autalavou* (youth), *Ā’oga Aso Sā* (Sunday school), and cultural activities like the *malaga* (traveling party), *maliu* (funeral), *fa’aipoipoga* (weddings), and *siva* (dance) (Lesā 2009: 64-65). The focus of Lesā’s research was on congregations in Hawai’i, but that is the same situation throughout other areas with a high concentration of Samoans. McGrath’s research among Samoans living in Seattle found that the purpose of church as an “urban village” was not to recreate Sāmoa in Seattle, but to provide a venue to highlight certain aspects of the *fa’asāmoa*. Language is one of the important aspects of that community. One woman from Seattle explained to McGrath, “Walking into church is like going home” (McGrath 2002:329). The church provides a sense of belonging for many Samoans. During the focus group, Tia acknowledged that both of her parents left the congregational church due to irreconcilable differences with other members of the congregation, but she said with confidence “my parents left, but they couldn’t make me leave!” That is a strong testament from a youth who is willing to learn language and stay within the environment to engage it more (cf Tiatia 1998:29-30; Fairbairn-Dunlop 1984:107; Ablon 1971:87). Tia enjoys learning the basics of the language and culture within this setting. If she ever had to leave the Samoan church, she is afraid that she would become disconnected.

The Samoan churches have the facility, instructors, and materials (e.g. Bible and Hymnals) to teach the Samoan language beginning with the A-E-I, but the inconsistency of learning the language is a big factor. The Samoan churches are “urban villages”, but they are not direct reflections of the Samoan village. There is no *fa’alupega* (honorifics), no *aumaga* (untitled men), no *aualuma* (womens group), no village *malae* (village-green), and no *ma’umaga* (taro fields). But what exist are the language, the culture, the people, and the oral traditions that can be passed down through the generations. These key components of the *fa’asāmoa* are practiced in a very unique environment. The hours spent at the Samoan church are long, especially on Sunday. Unfortunately, the Samoan language is not always used on the church grounds. The youth will speak and learn Samoan during the early morning Sunday school, the one hour church service, choir practice and Bible study, but other than those specific times English is mostly spoken. Following the service there is the *to’ona’i* or the traditional Sunday meal. The youth are exposed to the seating arrangements based on rank; the serving of the food is also based on protocol. The colorful *lavalava* or Samoan attire is worn, and the youth can hear the joking and conversations and observe the interactions between those who are a part of the *to’ona’i*. Mele stressed the importance of *to’ona’i* because it allowed her to learn the *fa’asāmoa* through the eyes of Samoan adults. The learning of the basics of the culture started at the church.

I know that at our church they stress culture a lot. For example *to’ona’i*. One time there was a girl and she was wearing her hair down, automatic got yelled at from one of our *mafutaga tinā* [women’s fellowship] members. Then she was wearing slippers when she was serving, got yelled at again. Then she didn’t go to our *Faife’au* to serve the food, she went to one of the *A’oa’o*’s [lay preacher]. Got yelled at again. So at our Church, I know for us personally they really hold high the culture as far as respect you know, just those little things we were

growing up as a youth member at our church. It's all these little things, especially with our *Tinā* [Pastor's wife]. She was always on us about looking like having a *fa'apatu* [for girls to put their hairs up] in your hair. Always making sure your *puleitasi*'s [Samoan attire worn by females] were ironed. Not looking sloppy. Just stuff like that you know.

Socially and culturally, the church is the perfect environment to practice different aspects of the *fa'asāmoa*, but a particular program and/or method must be implemented to teach the language more effectively. Pusa is correct that it begins with the church community, and there needs to be a beginning at the A-E-I.

Growing up in the CCCAS was a great cultural experience. During the 1990s, my church youth group was very large and we were able to divide into two large groups and compete in cultural activities, sports, and biblical education both within our own congregation and with other Samoan youth groups. I grew up learning from the church the significance of the *'ava* ceremony, the *siva* Sāmoa (dance), and oratory components of the language that Lesā terms the Samoan Language of Respect (SLR). Through the church, youth are able to learn aspects of the culture that they had never experienced as young American-born Samoans. In 1989, my church took a *malaga* and traveled to American Sāmoa as youth representatives of the CCCAS General Assembly meeting. Our group of 200 people traveled initially to Sāmoa and stayed in Faleasi'u, Upolu for one entire week before traveling to American Sāmoa for two weeks. This was a traditional *malaga* that exposed us American-born Samoans to the culture, language, and foods of Sāmoa. We were able to see first hand the life and culture that we had learned through our participation in our U.S. based Samoan urban *nu'u*. This level of language involvement must be consistent throughout the life of any child learning a language.

The A-E-I is an important role for the church. The basics of language and culture are all exposed in this setting. As stated earlier, the entire Samoan experience cannot be mirrored identically; however, there are aspects of the culture that can be used to teach youth. Everyone involved in the focus group agreed that the church is significant and that the basics of culture and language should be taught there. They would not want to be exposed to any other community.

4

“BUT ALL THAT STUFF SHOULD START FROM HOME”

Sila, age 30, is currently involved as a youth leader for a local church of the CCCAS. She was also born and raised in Sāmoa. During the focus group discussion, she commented that the *gagana fa’asāmoa* starts in the home. Sila shares the same insights as many people born in Sāmoa, basically that the *gagana* and *aganu’u* starts from the home and is taught in that environment. Naomi also agrees that the language should be taught in the home but as one of five kids raised by a single parent, she said teaching the language was not a priority because of other responsibilities. Muliagatele, the Samoan language educator in L.A., agrees with Naomi. She states, “Our parents were not fluent in English, but took that small English and no working experience. But have a little ‘āoga [school] to survive. It’s about survival. These people who came here, but they struggled.” Teaching the language in the home seems like an easy task; however,

according to both Naomi and Muliagatele, there are other responsibilities that will take precedence.

The *‘āiga* (family) is an important part of the ‘home’ experience. The *‘āiga* structure for Samoan families in the diaspora is not an extension of the *‘āiga* in Sāmoa; it is structurally and operationally different. In regards to the New Zealand diapsora, Pitt and Macpherson write, “New structures, new functions, new modes of behavior have all developed in response to the migrants’ new social environment” (Pitt & Macpherson 1974:48). Shu and Satele state the *matai* system, which is based on the *‘āiga*, is missing key elements in the Samoan community in Southern California. There is no distinctive hierarchy of chiefly titles, no demarcation of a chief’s scope of authority, and thirdly there does not exist a council to implement and support the chief’s decision (Shu & Satele 1977:13). Although it is difficult to duplicate the *‘āiga* structure in Sāmoa, there are always attempts to imitate what currently exists back ‘home’. The lack of this *‘āiga* structure in the diaspora has resulted in a shift to the church as the prime educator of the *fa’asāmoa*.

For Samoan youth, the time spent outside of the home far exceeds the time spent within the home and at church. English is the primary language spoken in school, work, and at many recreational settings. The time spent to actually speak and practice the Samoan language is much less than expected. The youth have little time to learn the language. Most of the time youth are either engaged in work activities or at school. Friends and the community are never all Samoans, but a diverse group of people with a common language, English. Sila, age 30, points out various barriers that make it difficult to learn Samoan. The barriers will vary from household to household but one example is

simply little use of the language within the home and community. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, statistically approximately 35.9 percent of Samoans spoke only English at home, and 44.6 percent spoke non-English at home but still spoke English “very well”. The statistics showed that Tongans, Fijians, and Marshallese had the highest proportions of people five and older who spoke a language other than English at home (Harris & Jones US Census 2000:11). Guamanian and Native Hawaiians spoke English the most at home.

For anyone interested in learning aspects of the *‘āiga* Sāmoa, it is best to get involved and engage in *‘āiga* activities because “Outside the *‘āiga* the risk of failure, the risk of anomie, of loss of identity, is great” (Pitt & Macpherson 1974:49). The extended family structure has proven to be effective in teaching and learning the language. The extended family is not necessarily only limited to families in terms of blood relations, but includes those who are a part of the church community as well. People within the church setting address those within the community as aunty, uncle and cousins as signs of respect. A Samoan male named Sam who participated in the focus group stated that he taught himself how to speak the language because his parents did not know how to speak Samoan. The church community was very influential in his speaking Samoan. According to Sam, no one speaks Samoan other than his grandparents. He states,

I was raised by my grandparents. I learned it on my own. So when I started speaking Samoan they were like ‘who taught you that?’ I self taught myself. And none of their kids went to *‘aufaipese* [choir] or *‘autalavou* [youth activities]. I was the only one that was forced to go to that and the church had a big influence of why I speak Samoan fluently now.

Learning how to speak Samoan within the home is a benefit, but according to Lie, there are other benefits the home can teach a Samoan. She is focused more on the

manners and proper etiquette that young Samoan children are taught within the home and that is enforced at the church.

To me being a Samoan is number one based on respect. Automatic! They have a saying that you know a girl by the way she walks. My mom always tells us that you know a proper girl and boy in the way one stands and walks. Number two we are very family oriented. So when I see that wherever I go you are a Samoan. I don't have to wear a *selu* [Samoan comb] in my hair, I don't have to prove myself.

Another female community leader named Sami was born and raised in an area of California with a few Samoan families. She recalls as a young girl that her dad was so very much into assimilating; he never spoke Samoan to the children. Although her parents were from American Sāmoa, they rarely spoke the language in their home. Sami is not associated with any Samoan congregation within the community but is very interested in getting involved in order to learn aspects of the language she had never learned. She was also involved in Muliagatele's Samoan language course. That has proved to be very beneficial for Sami and her family. She lacked both the family and village components of learning the language, but she did seek other options.

5

“O MEA OUTE FA'AAOGAGA O MEA MAI NIU SILA”
“EVERYTHING I USE IS FROM NEW ZEALAND”

The four largest Pacific Island communities in New Zealand are Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tongans, and Niueans. Within each community there has been a movement to

keep Pacific cultures and identities alive through various language maintenance programs. In 1999, the Samoan language became a School Certificate subject in New Zealand resulting in the following programs: *Ā'oga Amata* (preschool), Samoan bilingual classes in primary schools, mainstream classroom support programs for bilingual Samoan children, and classes in secondary schools for students who want to learn Samoan (Ministry of Education 2000:4). By the end of 1999, the Samoan language would be available at the University level.

Muliagatele said that “everything I use is from New Zealand”. Muliagatele has taught the Samoan language within the City of Carson and the community for over twenty years. In researching the New Zealand language curriculum, I was very impressed with the material available at both the government and local levels. Muliagatele said that the best part of the New Zealand program was the early Samoan education children received through the Early Childhood Samoan Language Programme. In 1985 Fereni Ete, wife of a Samoan Minister of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Newton, NZ started *Ā'oga Amata*. The objective of this program was geared towards parents who wanted their children to receive their first educational experience in the Samoan language (Burgess 1987:3). As part of the Congregational Church of Newton, this project would later receive funding and assistance from many sources, especially the Education Department. The program became very successful for both members and non-member families of local churches. Parents were aware of the need to teach the mother tongue to their children and as a result “There was only a handful of language nests in 1989, but by 1992 there were 101 registered language nests. The language nests have also become places where Samoan grandparents and elders meet,

exchange news and recite simple legends to children” (Mugler & Lynch 1996:238). These language hubs became very beneficial to the teaching of the language for young Samoan children. According to Simanu-Klutz (1999: 4-5)

Children who attend these ethnic preschools adjust well when they are enrolled in English-only schools. Once they are in English-only classrooms, the children, comfortable with their identity, readily acquire the language of the school of society much more competently than their peers who did not have a similar background in their native heritage.

Of all the interviewees Muliagatele is the only one familiar with the work that is done on language in New Zealand. The current *Fa’atonu* or Director of Christian Education of the CCCAS in Southern California has expressed his interest in a program that can be used through the local congregations, similar to those initiated abroad in New Zealand. As *Fa’atonu* he can initiate programs that would benefit the entire district. Hawai’i and the U.S. mainland do not share the same statistics with New Zealand in terms of the use of the language, but there are programs that can be imitated to assist with the language development.

New Zealand programs have shown to be more successful as a result of various programs and the initiation of the Samoan language among the Samoan communities. I recognize the efforts of those who were successful in pushing for a Samoan language program. I hope to use those methods in forging a program at my local church community. The political push of local Samoan leaders, the high representation of Samoans in NZ as a Pacific Islander group, and the community activists who allow their voices to be heard has strengthened their cause.

Ā'oga Amata

Associated with the Samoan Congregational Church in Newton, this pre-school program has become very successful in New Zealand. Since the 1980s this program has seen a rise in attendees. The *Ā'oga Amata* have students from at least four backgrounds. The first group is made up of children from Samoan speaking families with limited English. The next group are children who use mainly English in the home, but where parents are either both Samoan or one is Samoan. A third group are children who come from Samoan families but whose parents are New Zealand born. The final group are children who have Maori or Pākehā parents who want their children to grow up speaking one of the Pacific Island languages (Burgess 1987:1). Within this program, the Samoan language is used. If questions are asked in English, the instructors will respond in Samoan. Language mixing is expected in this environment, but the objective is to develop full proficiency in Samoan.

The main difference between *Ā'oga Amata* and other pre-school curricula is that the Samoan language is being used, the extended families participate along with their children, and Samoan cultural values are being emphasized (Burgess 1987:2). In addition, the practice of the *lotu* or prayer is common in the *‘āiga Sāmoa*. The *Ā'oga Amata* tries to mirror the Samoan family home as much as possible, and *lotu* is widely practiced as a main component. This particular program was initiated by a pastor's wife during the 2009 district meeting of the CCCAS in Southern California. There were twelve congregations present at this meeting, and the pastor's wife that introduced this topic was from a local congregation in Lomita, California.²⁵ Unfortunately, there was a

²⁵ Lomita, California is a city in the County of Los Angeles, California.

lack of interest by the parents. Many emphasized the ‘home’ and the church community as the main educators for language.

Samoan in the New Zealand Curriculum

Article 5, paragraph 1 of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education states:

It is essential to recognize the rights of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools, and, depending on the educational policy of each state, the use or the teaching of their own language . . .

On 12 February 1963 the government of New Zealand ratified this convention. As early as 1982, the National Samoan Council sent a deputation to the Department of Education. As a result, the Samoan language became recognized as a School Certification examination. Eight years later in 1990, the Samoan language was formally recognized as part of the New Zealand general education (Mugler and Lynch 1996:239-240).

The curriculum designed is not a teaching program; rather, it is labeled as a “basis for early childhood education settings and schools to design programmes for teaching Samoan” (Ministry of Education 1996:5). The objective of the curriculum focuses on oral language (listening and speaking), written language (reading and writing), visual language, and cultural learning. The curriculum does recognize that each child will not function at the same level; for that reason, the supervisors and teachers need to choose resources and activities that reflect the interest of the child and use a range of approaches (Ministry of Education 1996:9).

“WE HAD ALL TALKED ABOUT LEARNING THE LANGUAGE”

Sami had always wanted to get involved with the Samoan community. She was raised in an area with Hispanics as the largest minority population, with few Samoan families in the neighborhood. In 2009, Sami attended a Pacific Islander festival in Los Angeles where Muliagatele was one of the hosts of the events.

So we went to the Harbor Lake Festival. Just completely separate we go by the Samoan booth and where Mona [Muliagatele] had her booth. And up in the corner on this tiny piece of paper says ‘Samoan Language Class Sign Up’. The funny thing was I went by myself and when I went to that booth to sign up and Tim [cousin] was already on that list, and Sandra [sister] was on that list too. So everyone spotted that tiny piece of paper and signed up because they were all interested. So yeah, even just that small amount of outreach had that kind of response. And so I made it, it was still on us to follow up and so I did, I followed up and talked to Mona about when the class would be and she had already talked to other people about starting it back up. And so it started. That was my introduction to the Samoan culture. Be kind of in an intentional way. You are not just going because there are a lot of Samoans at this BBQ, but actually learning about the culture.

That was the beginning of Sami’s involvement within the Samoan community and the initiative she took to learn the Samoan language. During the interview, I asked Sami what she enjoyed most about Muliagatele’s teaching method. She responded that the beginner’s class was partly effective. Having a class once per week was not enough for Sami. She wanted a “set curriculum, a text book or some form of where you can see where you are going with it.” When asked if she had heard about the Samoan courses at the University of Hawai‘i, she responded:

One of the things I was hoping that would come from UH is a distance learning component online. A lot of distance learning programs use that, it is where people could do lessons. Meet virtually once a week and everything is kind of do on your own, and post discussions. Because I think that if there was distance learning, anybody anywhere could take like an audio tape for Samoan language.

In regards to the church, Sami agrees that the church should get involved but have an affiliation with a language program like at the University of Hawai'i. This type of program will result in a credit received and a certificate at the end of the program. It is unfortunate that there are no existing Samoan language curricula at any of the local high schools or colleges and universities in the U.S. besides Hawai'i.

The focus group discussion showed a lot of support for an organized Samoan language curriculum that can be utilized through the churches. Lua, age 38, said:

I really think we are going to lose our churches here in America if we don't do something about it, we are already losing the language with our younger generation. A lot of our older generation have passed on. Now people are leaving the church to go get spiritually fed at other churches. We are losing our language. In about 10 to 15 years our language will not be there anymore unless something is done. Having classes for our younger generation so we can bring it back is important. Back in the days if you could compare it, all the churches were strong and big. We had good leaders. Now we can't even have 15 families in one church. Why is that? I don't know, maybe because of language. Maybe because they don't believe the culture and the language go hand in hand.

Lua is an example of a young Samoan leader who was born and raised in America but has the passion to learn the language not only for him and his family, but for the perseverance of the churches. The churches have proven to be beneficial to those involved. Lua's ability to speak Samoan is better than most adults his age. He has taken leadership within his congregation and he has the passion to learn. A curriculum would only allow someone like Lua to excel in the Samoan language if taught.

Since 2004, there has been an effort to revitalize the Tokelauan language and culture in Wahiawā, Central Oʻahu. The organization *Te Lumanaki o Tokelau i Amelika* was started. This became an opportunity for elders to share their knowledge and culture to a younger generation (Otsuka & Wong 2007:242-249). This project resulted in the collaboration not only with linguists and community leaders but a curricula designed by volunteers to teach language revitalization. Otsuka & Wong (2007:249) mention with regard to the case of the Tokelauan community in Hawaiʻi; “Without any official from the relevant government, the maintenance of language and culture is an immigrant minority community would have to rely completely on the community itself.” Unlike New Zealand, the Pacific Island languages are not in demand throughout the U.S. Therefore community organizations have been active in promoting their language and cultures through different programs.

One organization has been very successful in Hawaiʻi with the teaching of the Samoan language. The first Samoan language preschool, Le Fetu Ao Samoan Language School, was established by the Salt Lake Samoan Methodist church under the leadership of Elisapeta Alaimaleata. The classes are divided into preschool and adult classes with competency in Samoan at various levels. Dr. John Mayer from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa has been very influential as both an instructor and advisor to the entire program. Ministers, parents and students support the language school with their skills, resources and commitment of time. Within a few years, Le Fetu Ao has exposed children to field trips and activities that have a practical learning component. Each Saturday, the instructors and teachers engage the students in songs, stories, legends and myths, activities, games, and language lessons focused on writing, reading, and listening. The

program also tries to utilize the home component by allowing adults and child to engage in conversation about random topics (e.g. homework, weather, clothing, etc.). During my interview with Muliagatele, she said that the *fa'asāmoa* begins in the kitchen. She was referring to asking the children in Samoan to name and grab different objects from the kitchen. Different commands are also practiced in the process. Different Samoan and English resources should be used to make this a fun and enlightening experience.

The Samoan church community has been very influential in the teaching of language and culture. The students at the Le Fetu Ao Samoan adult class come from different ethnic backgrounds. Some have married Samoans and have decided to learn the language in order to teach their children. Regardless of ethnic or economic backgrounds, the students at Le Fetu Ao have expressed dedication and commitment to learning of Samoan. Although a language school, there are still aspects of the church widely practiced, like the *lotu*. That is one aspect of the Samoan culture that is very much embedded.

SUMMARY

As a result of the interview and focus group I was able to extract important themes: cultural identity, diaspora, church responsibilities with language and culture, the role of the 'home' in teaching language, the current NZ Samoan language curricula, and avenues of teaching the language in the diaspora. The analysis of the data proves that there is a yearning by youth and adults to learn the language and culture in an organized *nu'u* setting. The church environment fosters and prepares people to learn and explore the *fa'asāmoa* intimately through interaction with an "urban village" setting. A

curriculum on Samoan language is desired and can be utilized within the “urban village”. The literature on Samoan language development in New Zealand and Hawai‘i can be utilized within the City of Carson as a major first step toward maintaining language and culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SAMOAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY (EV)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to apply the theoretical framework of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) to the Samoan Congregational Churches in the U.S. mainland, specifically in the area of Carson, California (County of Los Angeles). The notion of Ethnolinguistic Vitality was first introduced by Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (1977) as a conceptual tool to analyze socio-structural variables that affect minority ethnolinguistic communities (Mugler & Lynch 1996:229). While the Samoan population in Los Angeles is experiencing the survival of cultural activities through various church, community, and local government programs there has been a decline in the use of the language among American born Samoan youth. The vitality of the Samoan language will depend on the involvement of the community to promote the *fa'asāmoa* within their boundaries and to advocate for its status as an important heritage language in the U.S.

As the dominant language, English has seeped into most domains of life and it consumes more and more functions within the home, work, and daily responsibilities (Wardhaugh 1987:19). This situation with the Samoan language is reflective of a minority group that practices a language with a low vitality. EV proposes that the more vitality an ethnolinguistic group has, the more likely it will survive and thrive as a collective entity in the intergroup context (Mugler & Lynch 1996:229). Giles et. al. has identified three structural variables that will predict the relative strength of ethnolinguistic groups, consequently, in the maintenance of an ethnic language:

demographics, institutional support and status (Hulsen 1973:2000, Giles 1977:308-318).

With increased vitality the youth will be able to experience a language that is alive and build a connection to appreciate their culture more. According to Lesā (2009:3):

Simply put, the ability to fully participate in central cultural events requires knowledge and competency in the language. Those who do not know the language are not able to participate completely in the associated cultural activities. As such, they cannot fully appreciate the linkages between the ideas that give meaning and structure to cultural practices.

This theoretical framework is relevant to this research because it provides the explanation for the decline of the use of the Samoan language for certain subgroups within the diaspora, and it provides a possible solution to language maintenance within the community. Rather than function as isolated individuals to improve language maintenance, this theoretical construct of community mirrors the ideology of Sāmoa's traditional communal lifestyle. The Samoan village obviously provides a perfect example of how the language can be maintained through high vitality. This is obviously not the case in the diaspora with the dominant influence of the mega-culture and multiculturalism. However, this framework does provide us with a way of working with the village and communal aspects of the *fa'asāmoa* that should be emphasized. There is an accountability of promoting a stronger community through this construct, and the church can serve as the communal basis that will result in a larger population speaking, writing, and reading the Samoan language in the diaspora.

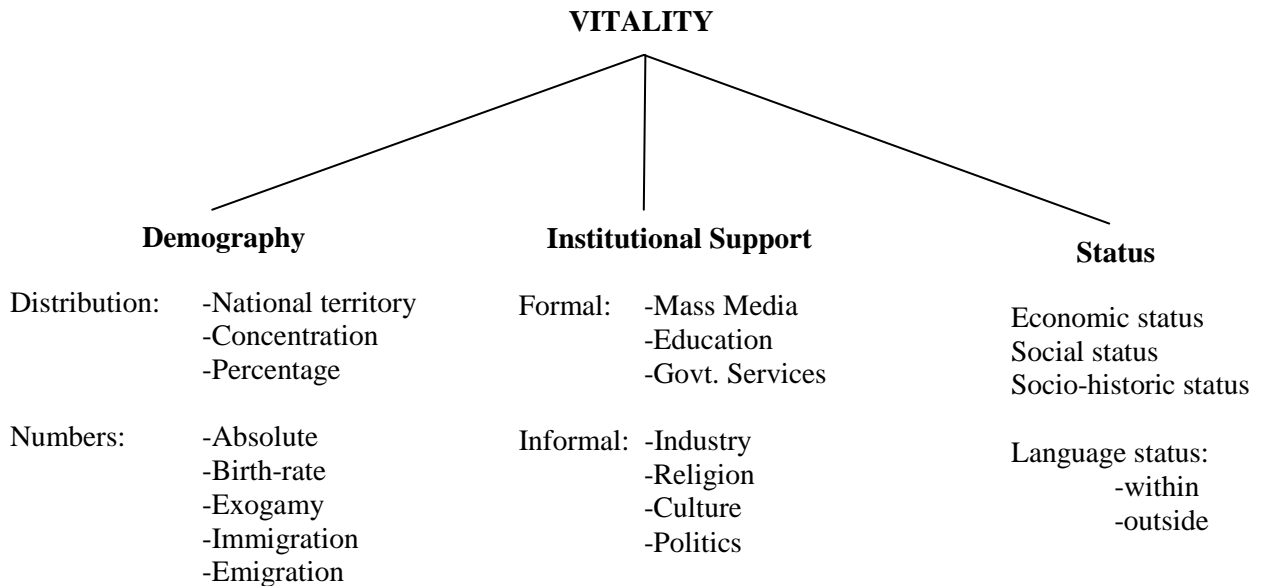
In measuring and assessing a group's sociolinguistic vitality, two models of vitality are distinguished, Subjective and Objective Vitality. The Subjective Vitality refers to the group's position and self esteem as perceived by its members. In 1981, Bourhis, Giles & Rosenthal devised the Subjective Vitality Questionnaire (SVQ) to

assess a group's internal vitality. The SVQ measures three dimensions of vitality (demographic, institutional support, and status) and each question is designed to "measure group members' subjective view of their own group in comparison to a salient outgroup" (Gudykunst 1988:6; Hulsen 2000:31). The Objective Vitality refers to the group's status and position based on the available data on group membership and activities. This information is determined by information on sociological, demographic, economic, and historic factors (Hulsen 2000:31).

This chapter will initially explore the vitality of the Samoan language as it exists today. High vitality is primarily based internally from commitment within the community to practice and speak the language. The high internal vitality has been successful because of the contributions of adults and Samoan migrants within the community. As a result, various community cultural activities have been formed to promote that high vitality. Low vitality is mostly externally due to how Samoans are viewed within the community at large; their language status is not often recognized. This differentiation between high and low vitality externally and internally will be explored further in the following section. Unfortunately, many Samoan youth and adults have experienced this low vitality due to these factors. In addition, the lack of support from within the Samoan home has resulted in this low vitality of language among this population. The current status of vitality within the Samoan diaspora in the City of Carson, California is overall very low. However, the commitment to promote language internally is high. This theoretical framework will serve as a guideline to promote vitality and thus promoting language. The second part of the chapter will explore the three variables of *demographics*, *institutional support*, and *status* and show the current

status of vitality within these three levels. The EV framework will be used as a method of making the Samoan language more vital within the community and transitioning away from low to high vitality of language use.

The following figure is included to summarize the three variables that influence ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles et. al. 1977:309):



HIGH “INTERNAL” VITALITY

What contributes to a high internal vitality of language use among the Samoan community? The first generation migrants whose mother tongue is Samoan along with those who are continually migrating to the U.S. mainland and Hawai‘i have played an important role in maintaining the use of the language to certain degrees within the home, church, and within the community. Although many American born Samoans have not taken a strong interest in the language due to various circumstances, the general use of the language by others within the community is a positive indicator that the Samoan language is still alive within the community. The Samoan Flag Day, Annual Samoan

Cricket and Volleyball Tournaments, and Cultural Days in the local schools are all indicators that the language is being used and supported. The Tafesilafa'i Cultural Event takes place annually in Long Beach, California and lasts for one entire week. The director of this event, Rev. Misipouena Tagaloa, has made it his objective to educate Samoan youth and adults and those who are not Samoan about the beauty of the *fa'asāmoa* through Samoan oratory competition, traditional dances, and booths that offer arts, crafts, and foods from the islands. This event draws hundreds of people from throughout Southern California and the Bay Area. This one week event may not maintain vitality long term, but it does offer people who speak the language and practice the culture regularly ideas on maintaining these gifts both within and outside of the confines of the church. For the most part these programs are initiated because native speakers observe the 'linguistic insecurity' among American-born Samoan youth as indicator that the language is in sharp decline among this particular population. For many, there has been a pidginized version of the language where speakers "remember only a few words or phrases here and there but without having any sense about where or when a particular utterance is appropriate" (Wardhaugh 1987:20).

Within the congregational church environment, various programs are initiated because there is an existing high vitality of people interested in practicing the language, for both native speakers and for those interested in learning. In referring to language, Muliagatele believes that leadership within the community is encouraging the development of programs that provide information through teaching. She says "I do it for the love. For the passion. The bottom line, *tautua* [service]" (Muliagatele 2010). Many within the church community have been successful in providing young people and

adults an avenue to explore the *fa'asāmoa* through their *tautua* or service. As a result of such community service, a high internal vitality has been maintained within the City of Carson. Samoan youth have expressed their Samoanness in various ways (e.g. tattoo, wearing an *'ie lavalava*, wearing Samoan t-shirts and sweaters, attending and participating in Samoan churches, serving at a Samoan *fa'alavelave*, etc.). Both the churches and the community at various levels have been successful in providing a foundation for youth to explore their interests with the culture and language, and thus maintain a high internal vitality.

LOW “EXTERNAL” VITALITY

What are the factors that contribute to low ‘external’ language vitality among Samoans? This chapter will later explore this theme in the three EV variables. However, it is important to define the possible cause of a low vitality of the community externally. Internally, I am referring to the immediate contact young people have with the language with adults and other migrants who provide an environment of pride for language and culture. Externally, I am looking at the factors within the community that can result in low vitality.

Low vitality in the community has a lot to do with the exclusion of Samoans from the mainstream Euro-American society. There are many factors to consider. The Samoan population is not as large compared to other ethnic groups and the stereotypes of this Pacific Island community has resulted in exclusion from the more ‘popular’ culture. Typically Samoans are associated with football and with certain ethnic gangs. Many negative images of these brown-skinned young men and women have generated a fear of

this ethnic group as people prone to “socially deviant behaviors” (Scull 2004:235). Samoans in the local scene have been called the ‘giant teddy bear’ at local bars in Hawai‘i and the mainland. In addition to working as bouncers or security at local clubs, they have generally been limited to landscaping or security work (Scull 2004:227). During the 1990’s Samoans were the bulk of the population in public housing in Kalihi and urban Honolulu. At that time, the unemployment rate of Samoans in Hawai‘i was 10.2%, more than the Hawai‘i rate of 4.7% (Tuana’itau 1997:7). I do not dismiss the fact that there are some Samoans who are involved in mischievous activities and are not representing the community in a more positive light. Unfortunately, the few have spoiled the reputation for many. The buildup of stereotypes from these activities has resulted in a community that has been socially excluded from the mainstream society. As reflected in the three variables for EV, externally the reputation of the Samoan community and their status has provided them little to no support through the Department of Education, the media, and non-Samoans. It is important to note that I am not implying that with a better reputation Samoans will have a higher vitality but with weak external vitality language development is more of a challenge. In addition, besides the negative view of Samoans there are simply other languages that have gained more status due to need, significance, and based on population and in some instances political clout.

Both the literature and the interviewees recognize that the English language is regarded as the language of success and very significant to gaining access to the full range of economic, social, and political opportunities. And yet many Samoan youth in the diaspora have suffered academically with English as their primary language. Many exhibit poor literacy skills in both English and Samoan. This often results in socio-

economic issues that have become an unfortunate cycle. The low high school completion rate and the small percentage of students attending college have resulted in many working at low wage jobs. Learning the Samoan language or maintaining a high linguistic vitality within the community is most likely the least of priorities within this particular group of young Samoans, but they do have a strong sense of belonging within the community. Regardless of language loss, the loss of identity is never challenged. Wardhaugh (1987:20) writes “a language may be lost but such loss does not mean inevitably that the group that used it has lost its identity although such loss of identity often does follow.” Life circumstances and a conscious effort to not identify with a particular group will ultimately result in one’s loss of identity.

In the following sections, I will apply the theoretical framework of the EV variables to the City of Carson and the Congregational Church community. The context of high and low vitality already presented should provide a basis for understanding the situation and the objectives of this project. With support in terms of demographics, institution, and status there is a potential for building a very effective language program within the Samoan church community.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUPPORT

The demographic factor refers to the distribution of an ethnolinguistic group over a territory and the number of members within a particular area. A favorable demographic trend will most likely increase the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group, while unfavorable trends are hypothesized to hinder the survival of an ethnic minority group and the use of the language to the more dominant language and culture (Hulsen 2000:30). Giles et. al.

use the following to define the distribution factors of demography: *national territory*, *group concentration*, and the *proportion* or *percentage* of speakers compared to the dominant group. The City of Carson does represent a concentrated community of Samoans, but the percentage of speakers of the language is not as dominant as those of other races and languages (e.g. Tagalog and Spanish). There are areas of Los Angeles County with a high concentration of ethnic groups. These various pockets have proven to be effective in the practice of their language and the maintenance of cultural ties through the arts, food, and religion. These cultural groups include the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Ethiopians, and Mexicans. The Samoan community is not so isolated within Carson, but they are spread out enough that the community of the language can be problematic to practice. In terms of *national territory*, America is a ‘foreign land’ adopted by the people of Sāmoa. As migrants to America, the concept of land or territory is not defined in the same manner. Thus, there is no ownership of land and no freedom for Samoans to occupy territories to practice and maintain language.

According to an independent study of the National Office of Samoan Affairs (NOSA) the largest concentration of Samoans is in the Los Angeles Basin, followed by the San Francisco Area and San Diego Area (Pouesi 1994:iii). The 1980 California Census recorded approximately 20,089 Samoans in the State of California with 8,049 Samoans living in the Los Angeles Basin (Janes 1984:143-144). For the 2000 California Census, the number of Samoans in California increased by 17,000 people. Samoans are estimated to number approximately at 37,498 in California. In Los Angeles alone, the Census recorded at 12,836 Samoans. The population of Samoans is definitely increasing;

however, the likelihood of concentration into one particular area or neighborhood is based on various circumstances.

The focus of this research is on the area of Carson; Samoans there have established social networks, churches, and activities that allows for a potential area to promote language vitality. Shu & Satele (1977:8) write:

Carson is the focal point of Samoan community life. For instance, several major Samoan churches are located in or around here, there are a number of ethnic stores established in the neighborhood, and the parks here provide the sites for Samoan cricket games and other sports activities; Carson High School, in recent years, is also increasingly being identified with its Samoan students. Furthermore, the Samoan Community Center in Carson, previously known as the Carson Community Center, provides outreach social and welfare services to the Samoans residing in Carson as well as nearby neighborhoods.

Those who participated in the focus group expressed their joy of living within the City of Carson. It is diverse, but the community provides an environment that reflects Sāmoa. Where else in the U.S. will people pass through a residential area and find families presenting fine mats and tapa cloth to guests. During family *fa'alavelave*, trucks are often seen piled with fine mats traveling through the streets of Carson.

My sister currently lives in Seal Beach, California with her husband and three children. Gwen lives in Seal Beach because the Los Alamitos Unified School District provides one of the best public school educations in Southern California with an Academic Performance Index (API) of over 900. In a conversation, my sister noted that although they live thirty minutes away from Carson, both her and her husband, also Samoan and from Carson, makes an effort to expose their children to the community. The children are a part of our local congregation, attend various city cultural functions,

and attend all family *fa'alavelave*. To my sister, Carson is where she feels connected as a Samoan and that is the community she wants her children to be exposed to.

There are five factors used to explain vitality through demographics: *absolute numbers*, *birth-rate*, *mixed-marriages*, *immigration* and *emigration*. Each factor is important because it identifies the level of a group's vitality and the potential survival of the language through a collective entity. The *absolute* number refers to the number of speakers belonging to an ethnolinguistic group. Within the Samoan community, there are many who speak and practice the language, but as an absolute dominate force within the society the presence of Samoans is not as large as other existing ethnic groups. In terms of *birth-rate*, Samoans are definitely not increasing in numbers greater than the ingroup. Samoans have become more settled and established in the U.S. mainland, but as for increased birthrate that is not the situation. Samoans involved in *mixed-marriages* is also a factor of language vitality. This factor does effect whether the language will be spoken in the home and thus practiced. There has been the *emigration* of Samoans to other areas outside of a concentrated area due to social and economic conditions. That emigration will affect the vitality of a language because of the removal of people who speak the language from key areas. I am referring to emigration from areas that have a high population of Samoans like Carson. The more people who emigrate outside of their community, in this case Samoan community, the fewer 'native' speakers there are to encourage and vitalize the language through the existing maintenance programs.

During this year 2011, a very gifted and talented *tulāfale* (orator) from my congregation emigrated to San Francisco due to work obligations. My church is dedicating our new sanctuary this year and one of the protocols during the week of the

festivities is the 'ava ceremony. The *tulāfale* who had emigrated to San Francisco was one of a few that the congregation had depended on for the ceremony. In addition, he had become a resource for many Samoan youth who were interested in the practice of the *fa'asāmoa*. Unfortunately, our church community now has one less chief and educator of the language and culture of Sāmoa.

With all the information gathered under the category of demography, there is clearly a low vitality. The question is, What can be done to increase the demography status of Samoans in the U.S. mainland? How can distribution and numbers play a role in increasing the vitality within the area of Carson, since there already exists a high population of Samoans? Although Samoans are very religious, they unfortunately do not congregate at one particular church denomination. Rather there are many existing denominations. By not maintaining close knit ties within a church congregation, it will be very difficult to maintain a high vitality.

The congregational churches have seen a decrease in church attendance within the past ten years. Other denominations have become more appealing to Samoan families; the new spiritual experience has become more “beneficial” to their lives. The church body is basically the main forum of maintaining language. Although demographically there is a low vitality, there is potential to build a stronger vitality and level of survival based on the existing situation. During the focus group session Mele stated “So at our church I know they really hold high the culture as far as respect.” Pusa said that at her church, the youth come together because they teach how to cook the traditional Samoan food through the *umu* (Samoan oven) and other *feau* (chores). She also said that “the responsibility of the church: *gagana* [language], *aganu'u* [culture], and the *fa'aaloalo*

[respect].” In the next chapter I will define a curriculum and potential programs that can be used to assist in maintaining high vitality within a community that has a high concentration of Samoans. This will hopefully lead to a high vitality rate for culture and language within the community and that will eventually seep into the local congregational churches and even outside of the churches as well.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The institutional support is based on the degree of formal and informal support a language receives in the various institutions of a nation, region, state or community (Giles 1977:315). The representation of a language within these different institutions and the degree of its usage is significant to its vitality and survival. The struggle to receive recognition within a nation with an existing official language is not always an easy task; through the efforts and push of pressure groups at the grassroots level there has been an acknowledgement at different institutions of nation, region, state and community.

The formal level refers to members of an ethnolinguistic group who have gained positions of control at the decision-making level of the government, education and mass media. Strong ethnolinguistic groups who gain control at this formal level have been active in mobilizing their own language, culture and ethnic survival (Mugler & Lynch 1996:232). The Samoan community in New Zealand has been very successful in their efforts of pushing for Samoan language within the academic curriculum. Muliagatele also praises their efforts of beginning programs very young for Samoan children. The collaboration with the Ministry of Education has formally recognized the Samoan language as a part of the general education not only for those of Samoan descent but for

students from non-Samoan speaking backgrounds (Mugler & Lynch 1996:240). In New Zealand there is a strong presence of Samoans at both the government and local levels; as a result policies have been influenced by the presence of Pacific islanders to assist with the growing numbers of Samoans. At the mass media level, the Samoan and Pacific community are currently producing the successful TV show “Tagata Pasifika”. The programming is done in English, but the programs promote the culture, language, and cultural identity of the peoples of the Pacific. People are informed by different organizations and programs on cultural revitalization. The vitality of the Samoan language in New Zealand is high due to the strong institutional support.

The U.S. mainland has not been fortunate enough to have representation of Samoans at any of the formal levels of government, mass media or education to assist with the implementation of a Samoan curriculum. Although it would be a great opportunity for the Samoan community to implement a Samoan language program at schools with a high settlement of Samoans (e.g. Carson, Compton, and Long Beach in California) there are no individuals in position to assist with this transition. The National Office of Samoan Affairs (NOSA) in Carson has been active for nearly three decades assisting the Samoan community with issues related to health, job training and employment, community activism, and cultural awareness. There is unfortunately no demand for the Samoan language within the educational curriculum.

The one area that both New Zealand and the U.S. mainland Samoan communities have in common is at the informal support level. There is support for language at the industry, religious, and cultural levels of a community. During the first wave of migrants to the U.S. mainland, the “majority of men were working in local shipyards, heavy

manufacturing industries, the armed services, the merchant marine, shipping and warehousing, and service industries” (Jane 1984:147). The language was easily maintained among the Samoan community because many worked together in the same industry.

During the 1980s many Samoans worked for Standard Brands Paint Company in Torrance, California, a city adjacent to Carson. Samoan youth who never finished their high school education or did complete but decided to work, easily found a job at Standard Brands because of the high Samoan population within that company. At the informal level, industry can support the use of language development and promote its use amongst people of the same ethnic race. People within the company easily found jobs for other Samoans looking for work.

The Samoan church is the most successful institution in any diasporic community for promoting language and culture. In New Zealand, Fairbairn-Dunlop (1984:108) stated the “churches thus functioned as miniature Samoan communities, and their ministers spoke out in favor of ‘speaking our language’.” At the Samoan congregations in Los Angeles, the pastors rarely speak English. Many maintain the language and expect the children to learn as much as they can within the family setting. Youth who are exposed to the Samoan churches show mixed reactions. Many are very proud to be a part of a congregation that promotes Samoan identity through language, culture, and worship; there are also those who find that culture and language development should never take precedence. Either way, the Samoan churches provide the best environment to understand different aspects of the *fā’asāmoa*.

The vitality within the informal level is very high as compared to the formal level. Church, community, and industry all support language maintenance with priority. Within these particular settings, the language is taught through the reading of the Bible, participation in Bible Study discussions, Sunday school lessons, and exposure through cultural events. The community's involvement in maintaining language is very strong as well. The churches have been very supportive of programs such as the Samoan Flag Day, Poly Festival, and Tafesilafa'i, among other activities. These cultural activities promote and reinforce language and culture through song, dance, and the arts. Tafesilafa'i, a Samoan based program, is part of the First Samoan Congregational Church of Long Beach under the direction of Rev. Dr. Misipouena Tagaloa. The initial intent of the program is to "be a safe space where the community can examine their culture closely and have it dialogue with theology. Tafesilafa'i, in essence, is culture informed by theology" (Tagaloa 2008:206). This yearly event has been very instrumental in exposing Samoan youth to canoe racing, Samoan cooking, arts, crafts, and to traditional song and dance. Churches throughout the community are very supportive of Tagaloa's program because of its emphasis upon language and culture. These events have proven to be very instrumental in maintaining a high vitality. So exposure is not only common within the church, but through events in the community that the church supports. The network of churches to promote language and culture is a benefit to the survival of *fa'asāmoa*, among youth and adults learning their culture.

Tamā has been very active in promoting Samoan culture within his own institution or church. He stated in his interview that there needs to be a "paradigm shift in America" among the Samoan people. Everyone needs to be responsible to provide a

very effective community circle so that the language is fostered and cherished. Peter is also in favor of promoting language, but it does have its place and time within the context of spirituality. The focus group interviewees were all supportive of any efforts of institutional support. These are a few of the many examples of people willing to make their community more vital in terms of language use.

SOCIAL STATUS SUPPORT

The status or prestige a language is given within a community can result in a high vitality and its survival. With institutional support, it is more likely for an ethnolinguistic group to “enjoy considerable social status relative to less dominant groups within the social structure” (Mugler & Lynch 1996:236). Those in position to make changes are often used to assist with the language development, as in New Zealand. The social status includes economic, social, socio-historical and language status within a community. The Samoan language has not been in a dominant position to have economic or social status. There exists no degree of control of the Samoan language over the economic life of the community. Unlike the Jewish communities in the diaspora, Samoans have not maintained that sound economic control of the environment (Giles 1977:310). As a non-dominant language within the diaspora, Samoans lacks social status. Within the school systems of America, language courses in Spanish, French, German and the Asian languages have been taught because of their high status in academia, travel, and community networking.

Samoan may not maintain a high degree of status at the national, state, or community level but it does within linguistic community network. The institutional

churches play a very important role in pushing for language, thus giving it a high status factor. Both parents and young people value the services of churches because of the priority and status given to the language. Almost all cultural events like weddings, funerals and birthdays are centered in the church community and the Samoan language is used to communicate (Mugler & Lynch 1996:237).

I have an uncle who is a *tulāfale* (orator) *matai* who is currently one of the elders of our congregation in Carson. As a practitioner of the *fa'asāmoa*, and as one who is well spoken and connected to the language, my uncle often comments that the Samoan church should be conducted in the Samoan language. There have been times when I would speak English before the congregation for the sake of the young people, but my uncle would encourage me to speak Samoan as much as possible. He believes that the young people will eventually learn how to speak their mother tongue if it is spoken enough and heard by them. Today rather than speak English, I speak more Samoan. I agree that the status placed on the language should mean that the spoken language within the confines of a community should be important and prioritized.

More can be done to improve the status of the language within the church network. The *Ā'oga Amata* program started in New Zealand by mothers of various church groups as means of teaching children the language as early as pre-school. This type of initiative has not been practiced in the U.S. mainland to the same degree as in New Zealand. Many of the programs initiated in the U.S. are on an individual church track with minimal interaction with other church bodies in terms of organization. A pre-school or an *Ā'oga Amata* would be a great initial start for young people in America. The Le Fetu Ao Language School in Hawai'i has taken the church community and prioritized

the use of the language within and out of its confines. The classes have been very beneficial to all those who attend, both young and old. In addition to a classroom curriculum, Le Fetu Ao has engaged its students in field trips for practical learning. The classes are conducted in a church setting, and the Bible is not implemented to teach the language; however, the Samoan church has placed the language on a high status. The community has found this program to be an effective learning tool. Externally, the Director of Le Fetu Ao Samoan Language School has maintained high visibility in newspapers, radio, and online news to elevate the status of the Samoan language. As a result, there have been many non-Samoans in the program too. I volunteered at the language school for one semester and I was surprised to find non-Samoans very interested in learning the Samoan language. That is a step towards maintaining significance externally to the outside community.

Churches within the U.S. mainland should use the framework of Le Fetu Ao to set up a practical curriculum. Currently there is no language school in the Carson area. Much of the Samoan language education is done on the church grounds. Even though language is given priority and high status within the community, the teaching format at Le Fetu Ao would be more beneficial as a formal curriculum to use.

In 2005, I attended a church service in Compton, CA where the *faiife'au* of a congregational church views language as a priority. Many of those who attend this congregation are from Independent Sāmoa, and most lived within close proximity of the church grounds. During the *to'ona'i* or the Sunday feast, the daughter of the *faiife'au* was dressed in traditional Samoan wear with the *tanoa* ('ava bowl) in front of her. The 'ava is rarely mixed on a Sunday in Sāmoa, and this practice is never done in the diaspora on

the Sabbath. In conversation with the *faife'au*, he said that the culture and language must always take precedence and the exposure of the young people to these ways is crucial to their understanding of the *fa'asāmoa*. He wanted the people of the congregation to place the language on a very high status, and that is what the congregation does. As a result, many of the Samoan youth are very well exposed to both the *fa'asāmoa* and the language. It is unlikely the Samoan language will gain status at a level higher than the community. The Samoan churches can do more to engage both the young and old in the *fa'asāmoa*. The following sections will show how curricula within the church can be used to engage more of cultural and language awareness and maintain a high vitality.

On a smaller concentrated scale, the demographics of the Samoan community, and the institutional and status support within the church provides for a high vitality. However, within the larger scope of the three main factors, the vitality is low to medium. The Samoan population is not large nor are we distributed throughout areas as other ethnic groups. The institutional support is mostly within the churches alone, and the status and recognition is only prioritized in the church and some areas of the community. The main objective should be to use the churches as both cultural and language educators within the community. The development of language curricula within the churches will only strengthen the vitality of the Samoan language and provide a space to survive as a viable group. With the collaboration between the youth and those in leadership like Tamā, Peter, and Anthony, there is potential and hope for a good program to gain more status within the churches.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHURCH CURRICULUM AND THE FUTURE

The church environment is the most successful location in the diaspora to practice, teach, learn, and observe both the Samoan language and culture. The interviews and focus group reveal the attitude many of the youth and adults have towards learning within this setting. The leadership of pastors, educators, and chiefs agree that the church environment is most conducive to these goals and objectives. What makes the Congregational church so effective in enriching the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Samoan community? First, a high internal vitality is in place. There are Samoan pastors, chiefs, and adults who have migrated from Sāmoa and play a critical role in the maintenance of the language. Second, the second-generation Samoans are passionate about learning their language and culture, as reflected through the interviews. Even though there is a very low external vitality in terms of status within the community at large, the church continues to play a role as the substitute village. Third, the Samoan village is mirrored as much as possible. Fourth, there are existing programs from New Zealand and Hawai'i that can be used to develop a curriculum for language use.

The following programs will serve as a beginning and trial run for a language curriculum at the local congregational churches in Carson. Rather than re-invent the wheel, I would like to utilize existing curricula. As the curriculum is in practice, we can find new and inventive ways of exploring how to teach the Samoan language in the diaspora. The feedback from both parents and participants will make this a successful project. The first step in establishing any curriculum is to develop a task analysis survey

of parents, youth, and the community. It is important to understand the need, the desire, and the role of the language in terms of priority, commitment, and short and long term goals. Is language development a priority? If so, how will this program fulfill personal goals? Is the participant willing to attend a local congregational church to learn Samoan? These are the type of initial questions that this task analysis will assess. Appendix A is a sample task analysis survey of different groups within the community.

CHURCH CURRICULA

The following curricula are designed for different areas of the congregational church (e.g. *Ā'oga Amata*, Sunday school, and cultural activities). I will mostly use existing curricula from New Zealand to assist in developing a program that would be applicable within the context of the congregational churches in Los Angeles. The objective is to develop activities and learning tools for instructors of the language and culture. These curricula will be geared for those who are both involved and not involved within the congregational church. The majority of the interviews from the previous chapter shared the passion to learn the language the best they could. In the process of making the church a language/cultural educator and keeping it accountable for maintaining that status, I hope that a high level of vitality will result from this project. I have not been formerly trained in the development of language curricula; therefore I will consult existing works, especially those by Dr. John Mayer, 'Aumua Simanu and Fata Simanu-Klutz. The first three sections will deal with the language within the context of the church; the final section will be a curriculum that is generally based on a program that

can be used for general language development geared to both those within and outside of the church community.

Ā'oga Amata

The *Ā'oga Amata* or the early childhood program is geared for young children at the pre-school age. The congregational church could seek funding at both the state and federal level to establish an *Ā'oga Amata* on the church grounds. There are certain requirements that need to be met in order to gain approval for teaching an early childhood program, but this is an excellent activity to involve both older Samoan men and women who have both a story and experience to tell. The collaboration with the community based National Office of Samoan Affairs in Carson can also assist with the cause of the churches. The church can be creative in their efforts at achieving the goal of building language maintenance and a high vitality.

The *Ā'oga Amata* is a critical step towards establishing language competence for young people. The achievement objectives are based on the following four points: listening and speaking, reading and writing, visual language, and cultural learning. These are also learning tools that can be used at all levels of teaching the language. The Samoan language is used within each lesson and it is the responsibility of the instructor to engage the students using his or her own effective teaching methods. Resources are provided to assist the instructor to develop appropriate activities that provide an environment for teaching the language in an effective manner. In addition, the instructor must monitor the child's progress through various assessment methods and this can be explored through different assessment activities.

This program is not the typical Sunday school lesson rather it is a formal educational program that includes paid church individuals through either grant monies or tuition fees. The child will be constantly engaged in the language and culture all day long. The vitality and learning of the language is much higher when taught at an early age in the diaspora. The Appendix B is an example of the early childhood program curriculum from New Zealand. What is presented in Appendix B is not the entire curriculum. The program is divided into a ten-week program with each week having its own objectives, activities to meet those objectives, and assessment method. Resources are also provided to achieve the focus and activity of that week. One resource that is very important and used within the church for young people learning Samoan is the *Pi Tautau* or the language alphabet, see Appendix C.

The Ministry of Education of New Zealand has eight key examples that can be used to work with children in order for them to gain from the experience. The *Ā'oga Amata* phase is very critical for the young people in America because it is most likely the only option to learning Samoan outside of the context of home schooling. The following are examples (Ministry of Education 2000:15-19) used by instructors:

- Example 1: Taimi o Feiloa'iga (Introductions)

The children are introduced to a song that will be sung each time they meet. The lyrics of the song are written on a big chart on the wall and the children are able to follow along. Both macrons and glottal stops are included to assist the young people to focus on the Samoan language as is consistently used throughout the Samoan dictionary.

- Example 2: A Reading Corner

At this corner, Samoan youth are given the opportunity to handle and look through Samoan books. Many will be able to turn the page and look at pictures. It is the goal that the children will engage in conversation about these books they have heard or are reading. There are many elementary level books that can be used, including Vave Toma's *Tavita ma Koliata* and Fereni Ete's *'O le Sāu'ai o Tuiioletafu'e*.

- Example 3: Block Play

The Block Play is to use the imagination of a child and learn words and expressions for shapes, patterns, colors, positions, and sizes. The children will also develop a stronger vocabulary by the use of the words and learn techniques of handling situations that might arise.

- Example 4: Social Language Play

Children are very likely to imitate their parents or adults when on the telephone or writing letters. For example, a child might pick up the telephone and say "Mom, sau e piki a'u" (Mom, come and pick me up). The child will use his or her imagination through this play session. The child can even use this game to ask questions about general topics.

- Example 5: Social Play with Boxes

Regular cardboard boxes can be used for social play. The box can represent a house, a car, school, or even a bus. The children will use that space to communicate actions and feelings about being within that particular area. Examples include, "Sōsō mai 'i totonu" (Come inside). There are Samoan books that have been written that can be used to develop the imagination and conversation of a child further.

- Example 6: Making Sikoni (Scones)

Cooking and using ingredients for a recipe is an example of how a child can observe, talk and ask questions in Samoan. The instructor will assist the child by correcting words and pronunciation. Cooking is a very huge part of the Samoan experience, and this is a great activity to practice with the children. It is a hands-on practical way of engaging the child to speak and listen.

- Example 7: An Imaginative-Play Area

Samoan youth who attend a Samoan congregation will participate in the annual White Sunday or *Lotu Tamaiti* service for children. During this Sunday service, the children engage in dramatic and imaginative stories and plays that are based on biblical stories. This example will develop the creative and imaginative side of a child through role-playing.

- Example 8: Portfolio Checklist

The portfolio is a method used to record the child's achievement and where there is need for improvement. Based on this checklist, the instructor can develop another method of teaching the language.

The examples above are only a few of the many practices that can be implemented by instructors to support language development for young children in the diaspora. The parents can also involve themselves in the process so that they can spend time teaching or learning the language. As a church-based curriculum, the instructors can also open up the sessions with a simple memorized Samoan prayer and use biblical stories that might be of interest to the youth. There should be a link between home and the routines of the *Ā'oga Amata* (Burgess 1987:2). The practice of prayer, cooking, and

social activities is important to continue to engage the child in communication within the Samoan context. High Chief Muliagatele is very supportive of using music to teach the language. In addition to teaching the lyrics and the tune of the song, the history is given by Muliagatele to put the song in its historical context. This approach has proven to be effective for young people interested in knowing historical events of Sāmoa.

Sunday School

Appendix D is an example of the current curriculum that is used within the Samoan Congregational Church. The current curriculum has a lesson theme that is accompanied by key Bible verses, an explanation of the lesson, definitions of key Samoan words, a sample lesson plan, and a song to sing. I have taught this curriculum for many years and most of the Samoan children are not engaged in the lessons. The instructors will often begin to speak in English in order for the youth to understand the main theme. The lessons last no longer than 30 minutes and in that short amount of time, it is very difficult to teach the Samoan language thoroughly.

One option that can be used to practice the Samoan language would be to assign homework and follow-up questions. During my appointment as *Fa'atunu* (Director), I noticed that some of the Sunday school teachers did not speak Samoan well, so this often resulted in lessons that are done mainly in English. Because the time is limited for Sunday school sessions, one method I found very effective is reading the Samoan Bible and defining the words that are not clearly understood by the young people and having them write in their Bibles the English translation. I found that the more they write and read from the Bible, the more they will learn the lesson presented and learn new key

Samoan words. The words learned from the lessons can be used for homework assignments or study group sessions.

There are some congregations that option out of using the curriculum from Sāmoa. Many use English Bible study books from local Christian Bookstores to enlighten the children. I believe that the curriculum from Sāmoa is adequate enough for the youth, it is however the responsibility of the instructor to prepare well in order that the children are engaged in the lesson. There are creative ways of role-playing the lesson, singing songs with the appropriate theme in both English and Samoan, weekly quizzes as a reminder of the lessons, or even focus group style with deep conversation of the current biblical themes.

Methods of teacher and student assessment can be discussed by the instructors as means for effectively teaching the assigned lessons. In addition, methods of better equipping the teachers can be explored through weekly gatherings. Many of the current instructors have been teaching Sunday school for many years. Rather than change the existing method and teaching styles, it would be beneficial to implement new teaching techniques to complement the instructor.

Cultural Activities

The congregational church is very involved with different areas of the *fa'asāmoa* culture. The *faiife'au* and the deacons are very involved in educating the Samoan youth in as much of the culture as possible. In order to meet these goals, church youth groups will often divide into two. Each group will be responsible for different areas of the culture. One of the most significant events is the practice of the 'ava Sāmoa (kava ceremony). The ceremony is choreographed and practiced as if it were an actual 'ava event. The

young people are given speeches to memorize and even where one sits is significant to the entire experience. This is usually a day of Samoan pride for both those involved in the event as well as for the parents. The two parties are dressed in their own floral *lavalavas* or uniform with beautiful fragrant *leis*. Friends and family are often invited to watch and observe this festive event.

During the rehearsal of the ceremony, those in leadership have the responsibility to explain every aspect of the 'ava ceremony from sitting positions to certain objects used in the event. The following words are always significant to learn: *matai* (chief), *tulāfale* (orator), *tānoa* ('ava bowl), *fau tāu'ava* ('ava strainer), *ipu 'ava* ('ava cup), *taupou* (village maiden), *tugase* (dry 'ava root). The young people are able to ask questions about the 'ava ceremony and become more informed about the event.

Following the 'ava ceremony, the two groups will then perform dances (*siva* Sāmoa) that have been rehearsed. The *sāsā*, *mauluulu*, and individual male and female dances are usually performed. The church setting allows for a structured event where leadership is dominant. This is reflective of the village setting in Sāmoa.

In addition to these events, Samoan youth are well exposed to other events like the *'aiavā* (presentation of farewell gifts), *fa'amāvaega* (farewell), *fa'aipoiopoga* (wedding), *maliu* (funeral), *fa'afulalega* (church dedication). During these events, Samoans learn the significance of the *'āiga* and they are exposed on how to act and address people of rank (e.g. *faife'au*, *matai*, and elders); they also learn their position with the status structure of Sāmoa (Ministry of Education 2000:54). These actions are not only practiced within the church setting, but many young people learn initially from the practice of the *fa'asāmoa* within their homes. These cultural events are not formally

organized but based solely on general events that randomly occur. Nor are any of them rehearsed, rather youth learn by watching and listening to what is happening.

A curriculum would be very beneficial for these cultural events within the church setting to better prepare Samoan youth. In order for Samoan youth to understand the significance of each event and how to react, it is important to expose youth to the *lauga Sāmoa* (oratory speeches). Each event has a purpose and each event is accompanied by its own proverbial speeches and legends. Exposure to these stories will assist in putting things in perspective. The church community will benefit by exposing its youth to these different areas of the *fa'asāmoa*.

Often during the events, many young people would whisper to me, “Brian, what’s going on?” There is a passion to learn why gift exchanges are happening, and why certain people are speaking. During my grandfather’s funeral, chiefs and *‘āiga* from Sāmoa and in the U.S. traveled to pay their respects. Days before the burial, all of the family clans congregated at my family home, and a very prominent chief from Sāmoa had the casket draped by his *‘ie toga* (fine mat). It is customary in Samoan culture that an *‘ie toga* is draped over the casket and this fine mat is called the *‘afuelo*.²⁶ Because there were many different ‘clans’ present, no *matai* wanted to be left out. The lower ranked *matai*’s did not speak, those with higher titles did most of the talking. My father made the final decision that the fine mat used during the bestowal of his father’s title would be the *‘afuelo* during the final processions of the funeral. During that entire event, all my young cousins were peeking their heads through the windows and doors interested in what was happening. They would asked, “What’s going on? I want to know?” The

²⁶ *‘Afuelo* is defined as a “fine mat laid over the corpse of a chief”.

connection between the church environment and the family is very well connected. A curriculum set up to expose Samoan youth to cultural events will only benefit a new generation of Samoan leaders.

SAMOAN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

Students interested in learning the Samoan language can participate in the Samoan Language curriculum even if they are not members of the church. The programs presented in the previous section are all existing activities within the church setting. I made recommendations and presented a sample curriculum that can be used within the context of the church. The *Ā'oga Amata* can be used to educate young children about the language; this Samoan language curriculum will be geared for students in elementary to college. Rather than develop a curriculum for each age group, one language program should suffice. However it is the responsibility of the instructor to assess an appropriate method of teaching the language based on the skill level of the youth involved. In order to make this effective, I recommend two or more instructors per class. The following subthemes are based on an existing Samoan Language Program Guide written by Mayer (1982) for the State of Hawai'i Department of Education.

Purpose

Within the confines of the church community, this Samoan Language Curriculum will assist instructors in developing a program that will help build proficiency in language and enhance understanding and appreciation for the Samoan culture. Communication of the language within the community will increase vitality and the future survival of the language both in and outside of the walls of the church grounds.

The curriculum will be a guideline for instructors to use to meet the objects of: language development, cultural appreciation, and oral proficiency through complete immersion in the language. The church environment is appropriate because of the facilities as well as the use of the church grounds as a village replica.

Why Study Samoan?

According to the U.S. Census 2000, there is an estimated 12,836 Samoans in Los Angeles. Students of all ethnic groups within the local schools are familiar with Samoan youth. Many are stereotyped as athletes with a passion for sports. These are students who walk around the school campus wearing their very bright floral '*ie lavalava*'s or wearing a sleeveless shirt in order for people to observe their 'traditional' patterned tattoos. Speaking Samoan will only heighten interest in the culture and encourage those who are already in the culture to connect language use with a stronger cultural identity. Most American-born Samoan youth in the diaspora do not speak Samoan and have diminished cultural connections. Learning Samoan will only help a person understand his or her Samoanness more, and through various lessons of immersion into the language, learn how to communicate with other Samoans. The Samoan language of respect is one of the main reasons learning Samoan will be beneficial to any individual. The *gagana fa'aaloalo* (language of respect) is one aspect of culture that identifies a Samoan.

Goals of the Samoan Language Curriculum

The primary goals of this curriculum are to:

1. Teach students the skill of reading, writing, visual language, listen, and speaking for a clearer understanding of culture and the ability to communicate to others in the Samoan language.

2. Provide an environment of learning that will result in a high vitality of Samoan language use within the community.

3. Extend understanding of the *fa'asāmoa* and the awareness of culture within the diaspora through knowledge of *gagana fa'aaloalo* (language of respect), *gagana fa'amatai* (chiefly language), *gagana ta'atele* (colloquial language), and differentiation between the *tautala lelei* (good speech) from *tautala leaga* (bad speech).

4. Advance the cause of culture and language through the existing “urban villages” or the church.

Each of the goals above is geared towards accountability of the churches in the diaspora to maintain and develop effective language programs. The facilities are conducive to learning the language. The facilities can be used for both classroom learning as well as for practical cultural experiences. With a movement of the people to push for more cultural involvement through language, such a program will develop into more advanced levels.

Appendix E is a sample curriculum format that can be used to meet the objectives as stated above. In Appendix F, I have included sample activities (e.g. stories and songs, recipes, and grammar and sentence structure) that can be used by the instructor (Ministry of Education 2000:31-32; Samoan Language Program Guide 1982). Each of the sample activities follows the curriculum format (Appendix E) of fulfilling achievement objectives, specific learning outcomes, learning activities, resources, classroom organization, and assessment. The short term goal would be to organize a well structured program and administrative branch that would overlook this program. Often the *faiʻeʻau* is used as the leader of most groups. It would be to the advantage of the church to make

this program an independent portion of their current curricula, though still under the auspice of the congregation. Rather than have one or two congregations run independent programs, my recommendation would be for churches to group together so that more instructors are available and a larger target audience of people are reached. Once key leaders are in place, it would be advantageous to conduct initial workshops on teaching the language by key practitioners within the community or from existing programs (e.g. Le Fetu Ao and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa). The organizational structure is very important as the first steps for making this program alive. A registration factor is very important in order for the instructors to keep track of all students.

Long term goals would include having an established curriculum in place within all the congregations. This would be a program that is not limited to church members but to family, friends, and those interested in learning the Samoan language and culture. Immersion into the language is very important if language development is to take place within the community. The program can develop an appropriate timeline that is conducive to work, school, and social activity schedules. Grants and funding for these projects will assist with the long term goal of maintaining language vitality and survival of the Samoan language. In addition, there are existing programs and resources that can be used to assist in developing a stronger curriculum. Once these schools are well established, a sample curriculum will be developed and presented to the general assembly of the Congregational Christian Church of American Sāmoa and other local congregations. There is currently no existing program in place within the local churches besides the existing church Sunday school and Bible Study lessons.

There are different methods an instructor can use to assess the level of improvement within these schools. The following are only a few of the methods that can be used to assess language development: quizzes, conversation, writing, listening skills, and practice of the *fa'asāmoa* during cultural activities. As the curriculum is more established, the instructors will be able to develop their own criteria for assessing language improvement and vitality within the community.

CONCLUSION

The Samoan congregational churches in the diaspora were formed to serve many purposes. Not only were they important for spiritual guidance, but for cultural and language maintenance as well. The initial migrants who formed these churches felt comfortable at these “urban villages” because of what they offered: family and friendship, spiritual direction, cultural identity, and more importantly it became a great environment to raise children. Second-generation Samoan youth realize the importance of this “urban village”. The interviews, focus group, and literature all prove that the churches play a significant role in maintaining cultural connections. The question that remains is; Are the churches utilizing their facilities today to maintain the cultural goals the early migrants had? I believe the leadership is weak and that not everyone is willing to work together. The curriculum of this thesis can serve as a starting point to introducing language maintenance and development within the local churches.

The data, literature, and geographic location points to the Samoan churches as the best facility for improving ethnolinguistic vitality. The Samoan congregational churches are effective because they maintain a high internal vitality with existing native speakers.

The community has a high population of Samoans, thus the churches are established with both social and familial connections, and existing church programs (e.g. youth group, Bible study, etc.). The church grounds are typically used for visual observation of traditional cultural events, and the Samoan village protocols and lifestyles are mirrored as much as possible within the congregational church.

Maintaining a high ethnolinguistic vitality is only possible if a collective effort is made to promote vitality at the three variable levels of demography, institutional support, and status. The young leaders interviewed have expressed their support for such a program. Once a task analysis is complete as a survey of the situation, then we can plan accordingly utilizing local church leaders. The task analysis will thoroughly evaluate the current situation of language use within the Samoan community. This process will explore Samoan language use in the home, outside of the home, in the community, at the local churches for youth and adults. One other important aspect of the task analysis is a survey of the available resources that can be used to achieve language development goals.

In the process of perpetuating language it is important to keep the Samoan language applicable and useful through various activities (e.g. summer camps, *malaga* and weekly activities). If speaking and engaging with the language is optional throughout the week, the youth and adults who do not use the language will most likely not push themselves, and therefore lack any potential of learning Samoan. Emersion into this project is very important to fulfilling goals and objectives of language learning. These are ideas that will be explored once an effective task analysis survey is conducted of the Samoan community. Overall, I hope to instill a sense of urgency with this topic in order to engage the community in moving forward to implementing a very important

program that will hopefully change cultural lifestyle. There are different methods and avenues that can be used (e.g. media, government leadership, Board of Education) to meet the objectives of this thesis. Strong leadership and presence within the community will strengthen credibility and activeness in educating about the Samoan language and culture.

In conclusion, the Samoan proverb states, *E lele le toloa a e maau i le vaivai*. “A wild duck may fly away but will always look back to its water of birth”. Many Samoan youth and adults in the diaspora represent that wild duck. Even though they physically live away from Sāmoa, they continue to look back to their “homeland”. There is a passion to learn the Samoan language and the *fa’asāmoa* culture. It is the intent of this thesis to make every effort to achieve that goal through various programs, activities, and true life cultural experiences.

APPENDIX A

The following questions were taken from the *Developing Programmes For Teaching Pacific Islands Languages* curriculum workbook for the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2000:17-18). The questions are part of a template used by the Ministry of Education to gather information about the level of language competency of a student and the level of exposure to language within the home and community. A few questions were added to include language learning within the church context. This survey is very important as an initial step to language learning. Without the support of language development within the home, community, church, and different environments it will be very difficult to maintain a high vitality of the use of Samoan.

Task Analysis Survey : Parents/Guardians

1. Is Samoan spoken between the parents at home?
2. Do the parents speak Samoan to the student?
3. Are there relatives or other Samoan families in the neighborhood who are in touch with this family and speak Samoan?
4. Is the family involved with local Samoan organizations (e.g. church, committee's, etc.)?
5. Does the family attend religious services conducted in Samoan?
6. Is language/cultural learning important to the parents?
7. Are the parents interested in becoming a student of Samoan language?

8. Is there a level of commitment on the part of the parent to assist language development within the home?

Task Analysis Survey : Youth/Children

1. Was the student born and/or raised in Sāmoa?
2. Has the student been on a family visit to Sāmoa?
3. Does the student understand Samoan when spoken to?
4. Is Samoan language learning important to the student?
5. Has the student been active in a local Samoan congregation?
6. Does the student feel that the church environment is conducive to learning language and culture?
7. How much time is the student willing to dedicate to language learning within the church community setting?

Task Analysis: Additional Questions


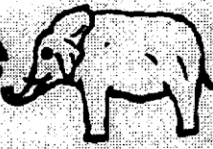

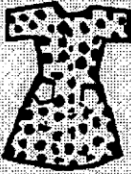




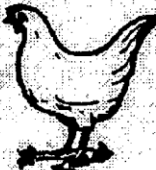
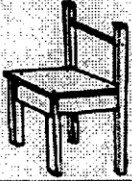

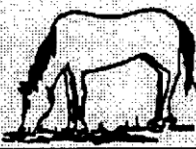





1. Are Samoan language materials available to the student at home (e.g. books, records, videos, or newspapers)? If so list them.
2. What is the attitude towards raising children bilingually and in a multicultural environment?
3. How often does the family participate in Samoan language activities (e.g. family evening prayers, listening to Samoan programs on the radio, attending concerts, playing kirikiti, etc.)?

APPENDIX B

The following early childhood sample curriculum was taken from the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Developing Programmes for Teaching Pacific Islands Languages (2000). The Samoan language is used as much as possible to implement this program.

Programme	Activities for the Week	Objectives
Experimenting with reading and writing	<p>Imaginative play: writing pretend letters, posting them, finding a letter in the letter box, pretending to read the letter . . .</p> <p>Resource materials: letter pads, envelopes, pens, pencils, crayons, old stamps, paste, play letter boxes, post-its, clothes . .</p>	<p>Children should have opportunities to use literacy materials in make-believe and role-play situations, for example, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write letters in pretending writing; • pretend to read letters.
Taking part in literacy experiences and activities using visual media	<p>Making language experience books: children make a book about Mother's Day. Each child draws his or her mother. We label the picture and write a caption using the child's language. The pages are bound into a book. The book is read to the children. Children find their pages and pretend to read them.</p>	<p>Children could have opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce written messages by giving labels and captions to things they have drawn; • Make choices about the layout of pages in a book

APPENDIX C

O L E P I T A U T A U			
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APPENDIX D

The following is an example of a Sunday school lesson plan; it is taken from the EFKAS *Vasega Laiti* (elementary) class (Department of Christian Education, EFKAS 2010-2011). The lesson plans are written in Samoan and typically taught in the Samoan language. Many youth in the diaspora will not respond when the lessons are done primarily in Samoan. English is often used in the diaspora to explain the lessons.

Definitions of main heading:

Mataupu – lesson

Sini – theme

Tusi Faitau – Scripture Reading

Fesoasoani mo Faiaoga – Assistance for teacher

Faiga o le Mataupu – Guidelines for teaching the lessons

MATAUPU 2: “O le Atua ta’ita’i malaga ” (God is the leader of the journey)

SINI: Ia a’oa’oina fanau ia maea le mataupu ua malamalama, so’o se malaga e ta’ita’iina e le Atua e taunu’u i le manuia.

TUSI FAITAU Esoto 14: 15 – 25

FESOASOANI MO FAIAOGA:

Ina o le a sauni la’u malaga i atunu’u mamao, e masani lava ona fa’apea upu a nai o’u matua, ua lelei o le a e sauni malaga, ae aua e te popole e ta’ita’i lau malaga e le Atua. O le a tu’u i luma o le Atua lau faigamalaga e fesoasoani o Ia ia te oe, aua e taunu’u ai ma le manuia. Na taunu’u lava ma le manuia la’u malaga, aua sa ta’ita’iina e le Atua.

O lea fo’i le tulaga sa o’o ia Israelu, e pei ona taua i le tatou mataupu i lenei taeao. O le le mautonu o Israelu, fai o Farao ma Aikupito a’o lea fo’i ua fesaga’i ma le sami ulaula. I le fuaiupu e 15 e o’o atu i le fuaiupu e 16, o lo’o fa’amatalaina mai ai e le tusitala le fa’atonuga a le Atua i lana auauna o Mose, e tusa ai ma le tulaga pagatia lea ua o’o i ai lona nu’u. Fetalai le Atua ia Mose, fai atu i le nu’u ia latou o atu pea ia. O atu pea ia e va’avaai i vavega a le Atua. O le Atua o le a tau mo i latou. Ia va’avaai i le olataga o le a saunia e le Atua. Fetalai le Atua ia Mose, si’i i luga lou to’oto’o ma fa’aloaloa lou lima i luga o le sami, ma e vaeluaina ai e o atu ai le fanauga a Israelu i totonu o le sami, i le iliti tai matutu.

I le fuaiupu e 17 ma le 18, o lo’o fa’ailoa mai ai e le tusitala le fa’amaa’aina e le Atua loto o Aikupito ina ia o latou mulimuli atu pea. Ina ia iloa ai e Aikupito, o a’u lava o le Ali’i, pe a viia ai o Ia ona o Farao ma lana itu taua uma lava, ma ona kariota, atoa ma ana ‘au e tietie i solofanua. O ia fuaiupu o lo’o fa’ailoa mai ai le fa’amaa’aina pea e le Atua loto o Aikupito, ma ua oso ai ma le fa’avalevaleyalea o Aikupito e vaai atu lava i le mea e oti ai ae alu ai lava. I le fuaiupu e 19 ma le 20, o lo’o fa’amatalaina mai ai e le tusitala le galuega a le ta’ita’i malaga. O le tasi gaioiga a le ta’ita’i malaga o le ta’ita’iina lea o le malaga. Ua auina ifo e le Atua le agelu o le na muamua atu ia Isaraelu ua mulimuli atu ia te i latou. O le ao fa’aniutu fo’i ua alu ane nai o latou luma ua tu i o latou tua. Ua fai lea tulaga ma ao ma le pouliuli i tua, a o le malamalama i le po i luma. I le fuaiupu e 21 ma le 22, o lo’o fa’ailoa mai ai le fa’ataunu’uina e Mose o le fa’atonuga a le Atua. Ua fa’alaloa e Mose lona lima i luga o le sami, ona fa’atafeeseina lea e le Atua o le sami. Ua vaeluaina e le Ali’i le sami, ua faia fo’i le sami ma eleele matutu. Ona savavali lea o le fanauga a Isaraelu i totonu o le sami i le iliti tai matutu. 4 O le malaga o Isaraelu i totonu o le sami ulaula, o lo’o fa’aalia ai le Atua Silisili. O lo’o fa’ailoa atu fo’i ia Isaraelu e le o tu’ulafoa’iina i latou e le Atua, o lo’o latou malaga fa’atasi ma le Atua. O le Atua o lo’o fa’atonutonu folau i le latou faigamalaga, aua e taunu’u ai i latou i le manuia.

I le fuaiupu e 23 ma le 24, o lo’o fa’amatalaina mai ai e le tusitala le tuliloa atu pea e Aikupito Isaraelu i totonu o le Sami Ulaula. O lona uiga o lo’o fa’amaa’aina pea e le Atua loto o ‘au a Aikupito, ua mafua ai ona latou mulimuli atu pea i le fanauga a Isaraelu. Sa tatau lava ia Aikupito ona latou toe fo’i, ae peita’i o lo’o fa’aalia pea le fa’amaualuga o le tagata. O le fa’ailoga lena o le tagata e le talitonu i le silisili ese o le Atua o Isaraelu. Ua silafia ifo e le Atua mai le lagi ‘au a Aikupito i le afi ma le ao fa’aniutu.

Ona fa’aatuatuvaleina lea e le Atua ‘au a Aikupito. Ona aveese ai lea e le Atua o mea e ta’avavale ai o latou kariota ona toso gata ai lea. Ona latou fa’apea ifo lea, “**Ina tatou sosola ese ia ia Isaraelu, aua o le Ali’i o lo’o tau ma Aikupito mo i latou.**” (Esoto 14: 25). O lagona o lo’o fa’avae i luga o le latou talitonuina e sili atu le malosia o le Atua o Isaraelu nai o latou atua.

A’OAOGA

O lea fo’i le fa’amanatu taua mo le fanau, e ta’ita’iina i latou e le Atua i so’o se mea latou te o i ai. E fesoasoani le Atua i a’i latou, a’o feagai latou ma a’oa’oga. O a faigata ma fa’afitauli e fesaga’i ma i latou, ua na o le Atua latou te maua ai le mapusaga, ma e taunu’u ai fo’i i latou i le manuia.

FAIGA O LE MATAUPU:

Faiaoga 1. Fa’atalofa i tamaiti, ma fai le tatalo amata. Fa’amanatu le mataupu o le Aso Sa ua tuana’i. Ta’u le mataupu o lenei Aso Sa, ma faitau le Tusi Paia.

Faiaoga 2. Fa’amatala le mataupu.

Faiaoga 3. Fai ni fesili e fa’amautu atili ai le mataupu ma usu se pese talafeagai lelei.

APPENDIX E

A sample curriculum format for the Samoan Congregational Christian Church language program (NZ Ministry of Education 2000:30):

Unit of Work:		Teacher:	
Date:		Class:	
Achievement Objectives The students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••		Specific Learning Outcomes Students demonstrate that they are meeting the objectives when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••	
Learning Activities The students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.			
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">••		Classroom Organization	
Assessment Activities <u>Teacher Assessment</u> <u>Peer Assessment</u> <u>Self-Assessment</u>			

APPENDIX F

Unit of work: Stories and Songs

Teacher: Name

Date: May 2011

Achievement Objectives:

The student should be able to:

- learn the tunes of traditional and contemporary Samoan songs and hymns;
- pronounce Samoan words properly;
- exchange historical meanings of the songs and hymns’;
- build vocabulary of new Samoan words.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students demonstrate that they are meeting the objectives for this level when:

- they can understand the cultural and religious meanings of the stories/songs;
- familiarity of the story/song is demonstrated through a clear communication to fellow students and to the instructor.

Learning Activities:

The student will:

- practice reading the stories and discuss them afterwards;
- read a range of texts in Samoan and retell the stories back to the teacher and to the group;
- use illustrations of the story and placing them in correct sequence;
- singing the songs using instruments and re-enacting the music creatively.

Resources:

- *Reading Aloud to Children in Samoan* (sound recording)
- A. Simanu and L. Simanu-Klutz’s *Samoan Word Book*
- K. Drozd and K. Tuiasosopo’s *Cultural Studies and Samoan Songs for Children*

Classroom Organization:

- small groups;
- one-on-one teaching.

Assessment Opportunities:

Teacher Assessment

The teacher will observe and assess the student’s achievements when they:

- retell the story;
- exchange information with each other.

Peer Assessment

The student will monitor one another’s progress when they are:

- exchanging information and agreeing or disagreeing;
- putting pictures in sequence together.

Self-Assessment

Students could note the titles of books and songs they have read or sung and enjoyed by:

- writing them in a reading log.

Unit of work: Recipes
Date: May 2011

Teacher: Name

Achievement Objectives:

The student should be able to:

- give and follow instructions and directions in the Samoan language.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students demonstrate that they are meeting the objectives for this level when they can:

- prepare a traditional dish;
- write clear instructions on how to do or make something;
- read and follow written instructions.

Learning Activities:

The student will:

- read and follow simple instructions on how to make a Samoan dish;
- use traditional methods (i.e. *umu*) to making a dish;
- instruct Sunday school teachers and children how to make a dish using the Samoan language;
- go to the market with instructors and use the language to do grocery shopping;
- write down recipes during a one-on-one conversation.

Resources:

- Written recipes through interviews;
- Website: www.panipopo.com

Classroom Organization:

- Students will work in either a group or individual setting;
- Parents and church/community members can be used to assist with the cooking/baking of foods.

Assessment Opportunities:

Teacher Assessment

The teacher will observe and assess the student's achievements by:

- the written material prepared by the student;
- the enjoyment of the activities;
- dialogue with the students about their learning outcomes.

Peer Assessment

The student will monitor one another's progress when they are:

- involved in small-group conversations;
- asking and answering questions on the topic.

Self-Assessment

Students could comment on their own progress:

- orally, when they listen to a recording of themselves presenting their recipe.

Unit of work: Grammar and Sentence Structure
Date: May 2011

Teacher: Name

Achievement Objectives:

The student should be able to:

- demonstrate both orally and in written form proper Samoan sentence structure;
- read and comprehend the Samoan language;
- learn the use of the Samoan Language of Respect.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students demonstrate that they are meeting the objectives for this level when they can:

- form grammatically correct sentences;
- read and pronounce Samoan words properly;
- use the Samoan Language of Respect towards pastors, teachers, elders, and towards fellow students;
- make a presentation using all the different rules of language (e.g. past, present, and future tense, etc.).

Learning Activities:

The student will:

- use the classroom setting to learn the language in depth;
- be engaged in various language games and lessons to develop the Samoan language;
- read out loud to the instructor and other students and make presentations on different current events.

Resources:

- Galumalemana Hunkin's *Gagana Sāmoa: A Samoan Language Coursebook*
- Resources by: John Mayer, 'Aumua Simanu, Fata Simanu-Klutz

Classroom Organization:

- The classroom setting.

Assessment Opportunities:

Teacher Assessment

The teacher will observe and assess the student's achievements when they:

- are able to form proper Samoan sentences and use the language in everyday conversation;
- use the Samoan Language of Respect within the church and community setting.

Peer Assessment

The student will monitor one another's progress when they are:

- engaged in Samoan conversation.

Self-Assessment

Students comment on their own progress when they:

- are confident to speak and read before an audience.

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